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Aa'ilah

by [Lycoriseum](#)

Summary

Fareeha has found a place in Overwatch. A family, among colleagues and friends. Only when Ana returns does she realise it was not complete.

Arrival

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The first bit of surprise came when they arrived at the training range to discover, for the first time, they were earlier than Fareeha Amari. The second bit was when their wait pushed ten minutes past their scheduled training time, and yet yielded no sign of the blue-armoured soldier. The third bit landed when Jack's hail to her personal comms device was rejected, only to be replied with a terse written message to be excused, no reason given. Surprise evolved into concern when she was absent from the dining room during lunch hour. Angela waited for thirty minutes after lunch time, watching Widowmaker sneak her own private meal away from prying eyes. But after that, no one else stepped through the kitchen doors. She tried hailing Fareeha's device as Jack did, with less luck. No reply came, so she went to the next logical option: house call.

Jamming her finger into the buzzer for the fifth time, Angela spoke through the speaker again, "Fareeha, if you're sick then you should come to med bay. You've tried sleeping it off before, but it didn't work. Remember?"

Silence. Her patience evaporated when her finger hovered over the buzzer again. So she turned to the keypad instead, tapping in Fareeha's code to unlock the door.

She was greeted with a wall of stale warm air the moment she entered. Frowning, she looked around to find the windows closed, with the persistent rays of a hot afternoon sun spilling through the glass. Sitting under the light, on the side of the bed with her back towards Angela, was Fareeha. The woman did not make a single move when Angela strode over, her head angled downwards as she stared at a...piece of paper? Angela stole a peek at its contents, identifying the familiar format of a letter.

"Fareeha, it is so stuffy in here," Angela said, moving past the bed towards to the windows. "Why didn't you—"

"Don't." The force in her quiet command made Angela's hand pause on the handle. "Do not open it."

She turned back towards the bed, hand falling to her side. Fareeha finally looked up from the letter in her hands, face expressionless. Her gaze was on Angela, but it had a blank, faraway quality. Concern grew to alarm when she realised Fareeha was trying to disassociate.

"Fareeha," Angela said, placing a hand on her cheek. "What's wrong?"

Fareeha raised the letter. Unsure of the woman's intent, she took it, noting a minute twitch at the corner of her mouth. Angela held the letter up and realised she could not read it. The entire thing was written in Arabic, but there was something familiar in the smooth, flowing handwriting. She could read Fareeha's name in her native language at the top left corner, and at the bottom was...

Her mouth went dry. She examined the paper, noting faint creases and the two intersecting lines where it had been folded. There was only a very slight tinge of yellow growing at the corners. Either it had been well-preserved after all this time, or it was written recently, kept just long enough for the heart to give in.

"Ana," Angela whispered. She lowered the letter, meeting Fareeha's eyes. They were still painfully devoid of emotion, and Angela's heart surged in compensation. "What does it say?"

"That she loves me. And misses me," Fareeha replied. Flat, mechanical. Like she was reporting the failure of a mission. She swallowed hard, pressing her lips together. Angela knelt before her, slipping her fingers through a clenched fist.

"Angela, I never told you. She is still alive."

In that moment, Angela was thankful she was already on her knees. The past came flooding back. Receiving news of Ana's death. Tears shed and prayers said by grieving comrades. Heartfelt eulogies, Jack's voice cracking noticeably in the mic. An empty casket being lowered into the ground, Fareeha watching with silent tears. Hating her own cowardice as she watched Fareeha being led away by her friends, an apology for not saving her mother sitting on her tongue, never to see the light of day. All of that...for someone who still lived?

"How did you know?"

"She wrote to me, a year after her funeral. Said she survived and went into hiding. But she could not stand by anymore. So she continued fighting."

Ana was alive. And still fighting. Another colleague, returned from the dead, fighting for the same cause they believed in a long time ago. It was starting to feel like a dream. Surreal. Angela barely noticed the firm grip under her arm, lifting her from the ground and settling her on the bed. She looked down at the letter again, as though the foreign letters would suddenly make sense.

Dark fingers tightened around hers. "This letter says that we will meet soon."

Meet. Soon.

Meet?

Ana?

"How did you get this?"

"I found it on my nightstand this morning." Was that why she wanted the windows closed?

"What are you going to do?" she asked.

"Nothing," Fareeha replied after a short pause. "I don't want to lift any hopes up."

In case she does not appear.

She nodded slowly, looking back at Fareeha just in time to see a single tear finish its path down her cheek. Letter fluttering to the floor, Angela pulled her in, holding Fareeha tight as strong arms reciprocated with equal intensity. She pressed her face into Fareeha's neck, feeling the steady pulse under her skin.

No, this was not a dream.

Despite vehement protests, Angela gave Fareeha mandatory leave from her duties for two days. During which she paced in her room. In Angela's office. In Angela's room. The doctor had intended for Fareeha to clear her head. Think things through and remain calm until Ana made her appearance. But all it did was make her restless, a panther caged against her will when she should be out on a hunt. And hunt she did, the moment her lockdown was lifted. Fareeha went on mission after mission, some assigned, some volunteered, the rest she forced herself into. Mercy accompanied her most of the time, soaring after Pharah as she rained devastation on malcontents,

helmet always turning this way and that, searching for a phantom yet to appear. Hope dimmed after each assignment. Fareeha sitting in the armoury still wearing her flight suit, staring down at the floor, revisiting old shreds of grief as Angela's resentment towards Ana grew. For staying away all these years, for taking so long to appear, for putting such a strain on Fareeha's longing. For choosing not to remain in Gibraltar, leaving only a lousy letter and a bullet in a security camera.

But that was a concern for later. Now, the mission took priority. Mercy kept her staff trained on 76, stopping the bleeding between his shoulder blades as he reloaded. Then he nodded, and she switched to the damage boost as they ran out of the alleyway, back into the battlefield. They were in a large abandoned town, taken over by an anarchist gang specialising in explosives. Either lunatics or insane geniuses, they lined each and every part of town with traps, ready to blow up unsuspecting stragglers. That was why Mercy stayed on the ground for most of this mission with D.Va, Zarya, Torbjörn, and 76, only floating in the skies long enough to heal Pharah. Damage boosting rockets into explosives would cause more damage than intended, and their mission was to seize control from the undesirables, not level the entire place.

While Zarya and 76 gunned down the anarchists, Mercy snuck a glance up at the sky where Pharah was. She had lost her nervous energy for the missions, wearing instead a grim focus reminding Mercy of search-and-rescue teams at disaster sites, after too many days had passed. Hope still existed, but burdened by the heavy weight of reality. The blue figure shot three times in succession, setting off a calculated explosion on another street.

"Reinforcements. 10 from northwest, 15 from east," Pharah reported, hovering at her vantage point. *"Eastern group is escorting a large payload. Advice."*

"Advance on their HQ," 76 ordered. "Pharah, delay the eastern group."

"Understood. Pharah, out."

So they pressed forward. D.Va and Zarya took point, alternating between the defense matrix and barriers, absorbing fire while 76 and Torbjörn answered with some of their own. Explosions from the anarchists' grenades and modified weapons were starting to become white noise in her ears when a louder, sharper blast burst in the air. She whipped her head up to see the fading remains of fire...and lightning?

"Pharah, what was that?" Torbjörn asked, with something akin to awe.

"Some kind of...mobile artillery," she said uncertainly.

"The payload?"

"No. The payload seems to be an explosive of some kind. Or a pile of explosives."

"Of course it is," Torbjörn deadpanned as he shot an anarchist in the head.

"What is the payload for?" Mercy asked, gliding forward to Zarya. "Are they willing to destroy their own territory?"

"I wouldn't put it past them. Pharah, are you able to—" 76's question was cut off by two of the newer explosions, and Pharah's short exclamation of pain.

Mercy looked up again, this time to watch the blue figure plummet towards a nearby rooftop. Out of sight. Out of reach.

"Pharah!" she called into the team channel. "What's your status? Pharah, respond!"

Only the surrounding commotion piped through her still-open comm link, accompanied by very faint hints of crazed laughter. *No. No no no!* Mercy turned, but a firm hand on her shoulder stopped her.

"Mission first. We'll get her later."

76 did not give her time to respond, merely steered her back to the front and resumed fire. Mercy blinked, taking a deep breath and latching onto Zarya with a damage boost as she threw charges into enemy lines. *She'll be fine*, she repeated the mantra in her head. *She'll be fine. She'll be fine.*

As if in response, a gasp and wet cough burst through the comm channel. They heard metal scraping against concrete as she coughed a few more times.

"Pharah, status," 76 said.

"I'm...fine. Better even?" Pharah replied, sounding stronger by the second. Then a short shuffling. *"There's some kind of...dart on my shoulder. I think it healed me. Did any of you..."*

"No. It's not yours?"

"No. It was on me when I woke up."

"Leave the speculation for later. Keep an eye out for any unknowns in the area," 76 ordered. "But focus on the payload first. Clear its escort."

"Copy. Pharah, out."

Again, they pushed forward. Faster this time, because the anarchists' headquarters was in sight. It was a dirty, thirty storey building that had a ragged hole in place of a corner at its rooftop. Dirt covered the walls, cracks boasted poor infrastructure safety, and rubble was strewn around the entrance. For a new gang wanting to make it big, they were not giving a good impression. Aesthetically. Combat-wise, they were a major pain in the ass. Very reckless. As in, *'gather an entire squad of crazies with rocket launchers in front of HQ and shoot at the same spot'* kind of reckless.

Mercy's eyes widened at the sight. Dimly registering D.Va's repeated chants of *'fuckfuckfuck'* and Zarya's imperative order to gather, Mercy felt herself being squashed between 76 and Torbjörn. She watched the anarchist squad fire in unison, rockets sailing towards them as they were enveloped in the biggest barrier Mercy had ever seen Zarya throw out. Closing her eyes and hiding her head behind an arm, Mercy felt the thundering impact of rockets shattering the road around them. The barrier took one, two, three direct hits and shattered, blowing the entire team backwards. Fire seared into her face and burnt through her armour. The smell of charred skin and burnt hair clogged her nostrils, a faint splatter of blood landed on her right cheek. She fell to the ground face-up, winded and dazed, the ringing in her ears nearly drowning out Pharah's shouts of concern. Her fingers clutched tightly around the caduceus staff, blindly squeezing the trigger for the healing stream, hoping it would latch onto someone – anyone.

As she struggled to breathe through the pain, she heard distant reports of a sniper rifle and bewildered exclamations from the lunatics in front of them. Then, something hard bouncing off her foot and the familiar wash of rejuvenation over her body. Her vision cleared and she took a breath, filling her lungs with no difficulty. Mercy stared at her staff, baffled. The healing was definitely not her work. A thick hand appeared before her and she grasped it, thanking Torbjörn as Zarya and 76 finished off the remaining anarchists. Sweeping an eye over her team, she found them back at full health. No signs of injury anywhere. She frowned, looking back down to find that thing she felt on her foot–

There it was. Mercy picked it up, turning the canister over in her hands. It was still warm from the forceful release of its healing chemicals. The crease between her brows deepened. This was a biotic grenade. Torbjörn's design. But there were none of these back in Gibraltar.

"Torbjörn." She held the empty grenade up when the gunfire ceased. The Swede looked up, eyes widening.

"Now there's a beauty I haven't seen in ages," he said, taking the canister in his hands. "And here I thought we lost 'em."

"Focus," 76 interrupted. "Our mission is not done."

"Then it's time you hurried up."

They paused at the new voice. It was heavily modulated, sounding more computerised than human.

"This is an encrypted frequency," 76 said. "How did you—"

"No time. Just know that I'm on your side. I've taken care of the tangos from the north-west. But Pharah's having trouble with the east. I will assist her. Disable their control ASAP."

The comm channel clicked off. No explanation for knowing their battle plan and Pharah's call sign.

"Let's go," 76 ordered, after the team shared a few glances. Zarya took point. D.Va – whose mech was destroyed in the rocket assault – followed close behind with her pistol, and the rest on her tail. As they launched an assault on the building, Mercy noted the constant blasts of Pharah's rockets growing louder with every minute they spent clearing the floors. When they reached the master control room – which was only on the 10th floor, thank god – Pharah's voice broke through the radio.

"The payload is through. I repeat, the payload is through. Its escort is dead but it's on auto-pilot. Should I destroy it?"

"No," their ally replied. *"It's too close to a network of explosives and we don't know the magnitude of its blast. Recommend extraction. Now."*

"But that means we fought all the way here for nothing!" D.Va said. "It doesn't matter if we deactivate remote control of the traps if that payload's gonna set them off anyway."

"Hurry up, 76. The payload's getting closer."

76's fingers drummed against his rifle once in a rare display of irritation.

"Athena, emergency extraction. Torbjörn, status?"

"Almost done. Go on down, I'll be along soon enough."

"Zarya, Mercy, D.Va. Head to the entrance, keep an eye out for reinforcements."

"There are no reinforcements, 76. Why reinforce a suicide attack?"

Mercy saw the crease between 76's brows deepen before she followed her teammates back down the building. Despite their ally's comment, D.Va and Zarya held their weapons at ready as their VTOL appeared. Pharah soared into sight over a distant rooftop, a large metallic bulk trailing

behind along broken roads. Mercy squinted, eyes just making out the steel case wrapped with countless wires and numerous smaller explosives attached all over. Shaking her head in disbelief at how...*exaggerated* the damn thing was, she turned her gaze towards the VTOL now landing in front of them, whipping about sharp blades of air. Running against the wind currents, Mercy entered the stable interior of the ship, turning to watch Pharah land and join them.

"ETA 4 minutes. Hurry up, gentlemen."

"On our way," 76 growled. Mercy could almost envision the old soldier baring his teeth. The men finally appeared with two minutes to spare, sprinting towards the ship.

"Mind flying north-east? I could use a ride."

"Athena," 76 said simply as he boarded, with Torbjörn huffing by his side.

"Understood," the AI replied.

Moving backwards and holding onto safety grips at the sides, the team fought to keep their footing as the VTOL took off with the ramp still down. They cleared over the roof of the anarchist HQ, flying in the direction of their anonymous ally. Two rooftops passed by before they spotted a cloaked figure running along the edge of the third, leaping off the building with ease. Light boots thudded against the metal ramp, gloved hand reaching out to clasp onto Zarya's outstretched arm, as a thunderous blast shook the VTOL from behind. The squad held their breath, waiting for a dreaded chain of explosions follow. But it did not come.

The mission was a success.

Relative peace returned to the ship's interior when the ramp was finally sealed. Mercy let go of the safety grip, watching the masked sniper release Zarya's arm and nod in gratitude. 76 stepped forward, rifle at his side but still on alert.

"Now, I believe you owe us some answers."

"Relax, Jack. Is this any way to greet an old friend?"

Mein gott. Is this...? Mercy glanced to the side where Pharah stood in her armour, visor still down. Only the thin line of her mouth was visible.

"How did you know my—" 76's voice disappeared.

The sniper reached for their mask, disengaging it with a soft *click*. It was as if the VTOL's atmosphere had been vented the moment the mask was lowered. Hair now white, lines sitting proudly at the corners of her eyes and mouth, the woman wore her age well. The devilish curve of her lips remained, as did the sharp glint in her eye and of course, the bold black lines of her Eye of Ra tattoo. Even after all the time that had passed, one could not mistake her for anyone other than the legendary Ana Amari.

"Holy shit." A hushed, Korean-accented whisper broke the trance, prompting an amused glance at its source. Hana gulped, feet shifting apart and hands moving behind her back, as though at parade rest.

Jack reached up for his own mask, removing it to reveal wide eyes and a trembling mouth, at a loss for words.

"Still a hopeless, sentimental fool, I see," Ana said with a smile.

"Ana." His deep, rough voice cracked for the first time since recall. They heard him take a ragged breath, before stepping forward and throwing his arms around the woman, who returned the hold with a growing smile. Angela saw her eye roving over Hana and Zarya, onto Torbjörn to whom she returned the nod. The engineer never liked making an emotional scene, without the encouragement of a couple of pints first. Angela's back straightened when the gaze fell onto her, throwing the medic back to the time when she was still making her name at Overwatch.

Ana was finally released from Jack's hug, patting his cheek affectionately before moving closer to Angela.

"You have grown into a fine woman, Doctor," she said. "As I knew you would."

Standing there, staff in hand, Angela found herself at a loss. For both words and action. Delight at an old colleague's return mixed uncomfortably with the growing bitterness she had nursed on Fareeha's behalf. Ana was alive and well, still in fighting condition. It was always good to see a friendly, familiar face. But this one hid herself away while her daughter— *No*. She stopped herself. This should stay within the Amari. Do not get involved unless asked otherwise.

She smiled at Ana as warmly as possible. "It is good to see you again, Ana."

"Likewise."

Relaxing unconsciously when Ana turned her attention away, Angela felt herself stiffen again when the sniper finally faced her daughter. Fareeha had stood at the side, unmoving in her Raptora armour, while Ana greeted the others. Her fingers were curled lightly into her palms, and Angela noted slight trembling in the blue armoured digits. A heavy silence fell over the squad when Ana came to a stop before Fareeha, mother and daughter locked in an interminable stare. Neither moved, and Angela had an abrupt impression of two predators sizing each other up. Then Ana broke the stalemate first, speaking in Arabic with a playful lilt in her voice.

"Cat got your tongue, little one?" Fareeha would translate for her later.

The younger Amari did not move. The elder's smile slowly vanished. Ana raised a hand, placing gentle fingers under the yellow visor, and lifted it. Fareeha's jaw was clenched. Eyes narrowed slightly, the same way they did whenever the soldier was overwhelmed and forced herself not to feel. Gloved fingers dropped to her cheek, pausing with uncharacteristic hesitation, before making contact with skin covered lightly in dirt. Ana traced the tattoo with a thumb, gazing up at her daughter with a look so soft, Angela wrenched her eyes away. She was intruding. *They* were intruding.

A movement to the front caught her eye: Jack was motioning silently for her to leave with the rest of the squad. She nodded, moving heavy feet after her teammates, clutching onto her staff tightly. The squad walked down to the next compartment, some already unlatching their armour before they entered. Angela stopped dead in front of the doorway, over-protective streak manifesting in the turn of her head, to look back at the Amari reunion.

It was quiet, but Ana had her arms around Fareeha's neck. The younger woman's arms were still locked by her sides, head tilted down so the visor covered her face. The ache in her heart sharpened – for both women – but she pushed it to the very back of her mind. She was an outsider. *Distance yourself.*

Angela forced herself to take a step back, at the same time Fareeha moved. She watched her lover's arms move jerkily, fingertips landing on her mother's back, slowly spreading so her hands pressed fully on the heavy cloak, as though to make sure Ana was really there. Then they slid across, the soldier's arms properly circling around Ana as she leaned forward, pressing her face

into the woman's shoulder. As Ana's arms tightened around her, fistfuls of cloak crumpled under Fareeha's hands, still shaking as reality took a strong foothold.

This is not a dream.

This is real.

Ana is back.

Chapter End Notes

"aa'ilah" = family (can include both immediate and extended family)

Slammed this chapter out after I stopped screaming about Ana. Next chapter should explore more between Fareeha/Ana. Until then I'll scream some more.

Rift

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Ana returned to a roaring welcome back in Gibraltar. Most of the roaring – which Angela swore shook the ground they walked on – came from Reinhardt, who had waited at the landing pad the moment he heard of Ana's return. A continuous stream of German spilt out of his mouth so fast that even Angela could not catch what he said, as he ran forward and lifted Ana off her feet in a bone-crushing hug. The sniper laughed and slapped at his enormous shoulders, demanding to be let down before she was squashed to a pulp. Her reunion with Winston and Genji was much more collected, consisting of a handshake and a reverent bow respectively. Lena waved at her, accepting the ruffling of her hair with a sheepish grin. When Ana had her back turned, Lena shot Angela a worried glance, which she answered with a reassuring smile. Surely Ana would have enough restraint to not kill a former-enemy-turned-teammate. The biggest surprise came from Jesse, who stood frozen at the side much like Fareeha did. Except, instead of a stoic expression, his eyes were red and brimming with tears. He took off his hat slowly as Ana approached, tears finally spilling like a waterfall when called an '*emotional ass*', and clung onto Ana like a lifeline. Jesse managed to call the sniper '*mama bear*' before she slapped him on top of his head, and Angela lost sight of them as she herded the squad towards the armoury, then med bay.

It was a very quick examination – the entire team was in top condition, save for a few minor cuts. They were released from the doctor's custody in high spirits – save for Fareeha, who declined the invitation to stay for her mother's checkup. Angela did not push, and busied herself by preparing the required equipment in the time Ana took to arrive at med bay. She waved away the apology for being late, stating it was no trouble at all, and started the routine examination. The results were impressive, but not unexpected. Ana might as well have been in her forty-year-old body, save for the normal signs of aging. Although she did note the litany of scars peppering her skin, which Angela did not recall seeing in the past. Ana once told her the more scars a sniper had, the less-skilled they were, and Captain Amari held herself to that standard very strictly. Since Ana's skill seemed to have remained its peak, Angela assumed that life without Overwatch had been hard on her. How could it not? To be left for dead, and to fend for herself for so long. It must wear on anyone put through that hardship.

But the scars could not quite compare to her damaged eye. Or rather, *missing* eye. The glaring trophy of her most critical mistake. There were faint, nearly-invisible scars around her right eye, left behind by the reconstructive surgery. Only one. She had refused to go for any more just to entertain her vanity. The skin was rough around the socket, where her sunken eyelid sat. The sight of Ana's condition sent Angela's mind into a frenzy: identifying the best procedure to restore the eye, planning to create the most powerful cybernetic implant she could, imagining how she could make the skin smooth again.

"You know, Ana, there are procedures we could look into to repair your eye," she probed carefully, hoping for a positive reaction. But all she got was a fond smile.

"You're very kind, but I'm comfortable with who I am now. It's a good reminder."

Angela bit down the urge to persuade her. If spending all that time with Fareeha – coupled with her past experiences with Ana – had taught her anything, it was that trying to break an Amari's stubborn streak, was like trying to cut a diamond with a lesser substance. So she nodded respectfully and started putting her equipment away.

"How have you been, Angela?" Ana asked, shifting around the corner of the bed to face her.

Hands pausing on the trolley, Angela looked back at Ana. This was new. She sounded so... sincere. Of all the times she had patched Ana up before, the sniper never really put much of herself into their med bay banter. She would entertain Angela's questions about her assignments, well-being, and Fareeha; give just enough information to get Angela interested, but not so much for her to become invested. Then she would bunt back a few superficial questions, before being swept away by her duties again. Angela never took it personally. Being second-in-command did not leave much personal time, and most of that was spent on her daughter.

But now, Ana seemed so much more at ease, in the *present*. Sitting still, hands clasped in her lap, fixing her with a genuinely curious gaze. No sign of the boundless energy that kept driving her forward – although Angela did not doubt it was still there, beneath the tranquil surface. She shifted on her feet, turning back towards Ana and crossing her arms.

"Quite well. Life is more comfortable here than in field camps. I have a proper bed to sleep in at night."

Ana laughed, with a twinkle in her eye. "And yet, you still wish you were back out there."

Brows raised, she regarded the older woman. That was a statement of fact, not a question. It seemed her eye was still as sharp as ever. Either that, or she remembered bits of their past conversations.

"Yes," she admitted. "But as I did before, I recognise that I will do more good in the long run if I stay here."

"That is for the best," Ana concurred. "After all, Overwatch always needs someone to keep it in check. What," she laughed again at Angela's skeptical look. "Don't you agree?"

"I...do," Angela replied. "But I always thought you saw my protests as a hindrance."

"Technically, they were," the older woman admitted. "You slowed down many mission plans. Frayed a lot of nerves. Quite a number of people wanted you to be kept on a tighter leash."

Angela nodded. Every time she spoke out, there would be a wave of backlash that usually won. "And I was."

"You were. But not as tight as they wanted," Ana said. "You won't believe the amount of complaints I received about you. I almost had to carve out a 'Ziegler' section on my desk, before I threatened to shoot anyone who dared to raise more petty concerns."

The doctor blinked. "You helped me?"

"It may seem unbelievable, but I do not enjoy violence myself. I do it because it is the best way I can help. What I would not give to have your skills, to heal rather than kill. Soldiers like me will not end conflicts, Angela. It is up to the peacemakers. Like you."

She stared back into the sniper's eyes, feeling her old assumptions being tipped over. All that pressure she felt from Ana in the past. What is just her imagination? The ridiculousness of it all cracked a smile on her face.

"But having a peacemaker hasn't helped much, I'm afraid."

"Of course it hasn't. You're working with a team of soldiers. It's like trying to walk ten dogs at once. You'll just get pulled along to wherever they want to go."

Angela tilted her head, brow arched. "Walk ten dogs?"

"Don't ask," Ana said quickly, putting her eye patch back on.

"Wait." She stopped Ana before she left her perch on the bed. Holding tightly onto the sudden spurt of courage, Angela asked the question that burnt in the back of her throat.

"Where have you been, all these years?"

"Egypt," Ana replied, hands clasping together again. "I travelled sometimes. But I spent most of my time in Egypt, picking off scum one by one."

"And why didn't you tell us you were alive? You could have come back. We could have helped you—"

"How? With the tattered remains of Overwatch?" Ana replied. A sliver of hardness appeared in her eye, but it was quickly hidden away. She gave a sigh. "No, I'm sorry. I know what you mean. After I recovered, I thought it was for the best that people continued to believe I was dead. Gone, like all of my friends. My family."

"What about Fareeha? You didn't think to return for her?"

Ana paused, eye narrowing slightly. "Fareeha has always done well without me," she said quietly.

"She *loves* you, Ana. She deserved more than just a letter."

Oh shit. Angela backpedaled until her mind hit the back of her skull, trying to keep her calm as the sniper's gaze pierced through her. It was like being on the business end of her scope. The doctor kept herself steady through the intense scrutiny, pushing down the mental image of crosshairs on her head.

"Fareeha told you."

"Only recently."

Silence settled over them, threatening to overshadow the newfound ease Angela gained with Ana. All that cautious rapport about to crumble because she could not keep her mouth shut. *Stay away. Remember, stay away.*

"She must trust you then," Ana said simply, tone as placid as it had been years ago. The doctor took the hint and backed off. Getting off the bed, Ana slipped her arms through her cloak. Angela stood as well, trailing behind the sniper as she made for the doors. Before opening them though, Ana spun around, causing Angela to stop dead in her tracks.

"Fareeha is my daughter. I want nothing but the best for her. Everything I've done was for her sake." Skin crinkled where Ana's mouth curled in a tired smirk. "But it seems she has different ideas about what is *'best'* for her."

"Then talk to her," Angela said, allowing herself one last word. "Please."

Ana's eye lingered on her a few moments more, before she left the med bay quietly. Angela sighed, settling herself on the nearest bed, and prayed that the next Amari family meeting would be a smooth one.

The past week had been odd and uncomfortable. Before Ana's return, Fareeha had kept such a

sharp eye out for her. Noticing twitches in shadows and looking for ghostly figures in the distance, hoping that she would appear as soon as possible. But now that she was back, that hope spun right around and flew to the other extreme, turning her short-lived joy at seeing her mother again into an active effort to stay *away* from her. Every encounter with Ana was stiff. Both mother and daughter did not know how to start bridging the years of estrangement. They fell into a routine of impersonal conversation and small talk, which threatened to drive Fareeha crazy each time they were trapped in a verbal exchange. The two acted more like distant friends than flesh and blood. Hell, even Jack, Reinhardt and Jesse seemed closer to Ana than her, able to talk non-stop from dawn to dusk and dusk to dawn.

At first, Fareeha thought she had Angela for backup, that the woman would help make the first move for her if she was lost. But the doctor kept to herself, even when Fareeha threw a pleading look that clearly screamed '*save me*'. A minor argument later, Fareeha was told in no uncertain terms that *she* should be the one to start, because she was Ana's daughter. Not Angela. So here she was, stuck in a weird stasis of neither-here-nor-there with her mother.

Fareeha stopped walking, giving one last groan into her hands before she went into the kitchen. *At least there'll be other people around*, she comforted herself. They were holding a celebration for both Ana and Jack, as they never really threw a big fuss over Jack's identity after he took off his mask. And Jack, to their surprise, did not object as strongly to the festivities as before.

The easy beats of Lucio's music can be heard from where she stood, along with the occasional laughter punctuating a continuous stream of conversation. Fareeha straightened her shoulders and walked into the party. There was already a crowd gathered around the dining table, with Reinhardt telling a story about the golden days of Overwatch. From the way he swung his arms and made sound effects, Fareeha assumed he was talking about a mission. Ana and Jack sat at either side of him, occasionally adding in a few details he missed. The other agents sat around them, enthralled by the giant's tale. Lena, Torbjörn, and Jesse laughed as boisterously as Reinhardt. Hana stuck to Ana's side, which was expected after she spent the whole week following the sniper around. Lucio sat beside her and in the next chair was Genji, listening attentively and giving the occasional nod or quiet laugh. Zarya, Mei, and Winston sat off to the side as the table was filled, but were still engaged with the rest.

Fareeha slipped in as quietly as possible, spotting Widowmaker lounging near the window, in the darkest corner of the room. The Frenchwoman stared out of the glass panel, looking utterly bored and uninterested in the commotion. She must have been dragged here by Lena, or she would never have appeared. Her first encounter with Ana had been...thorny. It was in a training session, where almost no targets were left for the team after they fell into a fierce sniping competition. Barbs were traded endlessly, only stopping when they were out of each other's sight.

Well, at least someone else had a worse relationship with Ana than her. As she made her way to the food on the kitchen counters, Angela slipped away from her seat near the group and joined her. She gave Fareeha's hand a short discreet squeeze, before handing her a plate and watching as Fareeha took bits of food from various dishes.

"You look tired," Angela said, leaning against the counter while keeping a respectable amount of distance from her. Ever since Ana's appearance, the two had been on their best behaviour. Even better than they were when their relationship was a secret in the beginning. Only behind closed doors did they dare act closer than friends, and it became the second goddamned thing that pushed Fareeha to the brink of insanity.

"I was in the gym," she muttered, stuffing her mouth with a sushi roll.

"Have you spoken to her yet?"

"No."

She saw Angela's hand move towards her instinctively, then jerk back halfway. Fareeha cursed silently, chewing on her food and willing her body to stay where it was.

"I will, alright? I'm just...not ready."

Angela threw her a doubtful look before moving back towards the group. As she did so, Reinhardt's eyes fell upon Fareeha and she felt her stomach backflip out of her body.

"Fareeha!" he boomed, waving his hand. "Why are you hiding back there? Come and join us!"

Resisting the urge to throw herself through the window Widowmaker sat by, she approached the group, when Hana started rising out of her seat.

"Here, you can take my—"

"No," Fareeha interjected and pushed the girl back down. "I'll just take another—"

"Here!" Lucio said. He yanked over a nearby chair, settling it behind Ana and Hana.

She was left with no choice. It took all the strength she had to keep a poker face as she sat down, feeling Ana's gaze on her. She ate another piece of sushi, glancing over to where Angela sat... biting her lip in an unsuccessful attempt at hiding a smile. *That bitch.*

"Ah, this brings back memories!" Reinhardt said, still looking at Fareeha fondly.

"You've said that for like, the tenth time already," Jesse drawled. He took a long draught from his bottle of beer.

"Yes, but this!" He stretched his arm across, grabbing onto Fareeha's shoulder and pulling her close, so that Ana sat squashed between her and Reinhardt. "This brings back the most *adorable* memories I can think of, back at our old headquarters."

A large hand ruffled the top of Fareeha's head. "I remember this little one running around the base in her cute little dresses, pretending she was one of us!"

Hana burst out laughing beside her, grabbing onto her arm. "You? In a *dress*? I can't—" Then she dissolved into more laughter with her eyes closed, letting Fareeha's withering glare go to waste. Some of the others joined in, and the soldier wanted to fold into herself and disappear.

"I remember her stealing Ana's beret too," Jack added with a small smile, looking at Fareeha who felt the beginnings of warmth growing in her cheeks. "You loved wearing that thing."

She nodded, putting another piece of food in her mouth without looking. Fareeha did love wearing Ana's beret, often pretending to be her mother and sniping random targets like a stack of papers, or a coffee mug. Spotting Ana walking around base without her beret on, usually meant that Fareeha was around as well.

"I was so happy when you finally arrived here, Fareeha," Reinhardt continued, patting her shoulder. "To see you all grown and strong, chasing your dream." His hand left Fareeha and onto Ana's back.

"You must be so proud to have a daughter like her."

The silence stretched to an eternity for Fareeha as Ana turned towards her. She looked straight

back at her mother, body stilling, struck again by how much older Ana looked. Every time they were together, she could not help but examine her mother's face. Each line and wrinkle sent another lash of pain across her heart, reminding her of all the time they had lost. And yet here she was, wasting more time because she could not work up the courage to speak to her mother like a rational adult. She was a child. *Such* a child.

"Yes, I am."

Ana's simple words echoed through her ears. She stared at Ana as the older woman reached up, running a thumb across her cheek softly. A wan smile appeared on Ana's lips before her hand fell away, and she turned back to Reinhardt who had launched into yet another story. Fareeha let her gaze drop, placing the fork trembling in her hand back onto the plate. She took a discreet breath, swallowing against the lump in her throat. Then Hana's hand on her arm brought her attention back up.

"We're running low on soft drinks," she said. "But I have a pack in my room. Mind getting it for us?"

Hana wore a knowing look as she took her plate. Fareeha got up from her chair, quickly patting the girl's head in gratitude and strode out of the kitchen, feeling Angela's eyes on her back. Only when she entered Hana's room did the tears finally fall.

"I'm going insane."

Angela hummed, not looking away from her computer screen when Fareeha entered her office. It had become a common occurrence for the last week, after the celebration: Fareeha would burst into whichever room she was in, and pace incessantly while muttering under her breath until she calmed down. Either by herself, or by Angela. Usually it was a combination of both, the exact mix dependent on how absorbed in work Angela was. Today Fareeha's timing was fortuitous, catching the doctor just as she finished up a memo to be sent to Torbjörn.

"Just a second," Angela said, signing off on the note. Already she was aware of the lack of Fareeha's footsteps going from side-to-side, hearing only the wheels of an empty chair being dragged across the floor. The chair creaked when Fareeha fell heavily into it but after that, nothing. Turning off the screen after the memo was sent, Angela spun around in her own chair to find Fareeha with elbows on knees, face buried in her hands.

"What happened?" she asked.

"I'm such a shit, Angela," Fareeha said, voice muffled against her palms. "Why am I such a fucking shit?"

"You have to give me context, darling."

"*My mother!*" the Egyptian spurted exasperatedly, jerking her hands down. "She keeps trying to talk to me, and all I can think of is how much simpler it was before she came back."

"That's...understandable."

"No, it's not. I was ready to let go of everything. When she was away, I was ready to let go of everything that happened between us, if it meant that she would return. I wanted to forget and start over again. I was so ready to...*ugh!*" She shot up from her chair and started to pace around the office, rubbing her eyes.

"But now that she's back, it's so hard to let go. I tried. I tried so hard, but I still cannot let go. She's

so much more attentive than before and I still cannot... I'm such a *shit*, Angela," she repeated herself, hands clenching and unclenching repeatedly.

Angela caught her hands as she finished another circuit, forcing her to stop. She guided the woman back into her chair, fingers wrapped around Fareeha's tightly so her fidgeting legs would not carry her off again.

"No, you are not. Two weeks is not enough to let go of all those years of grievances, Fareeha. It is normal if you can't just yet."

Fareeha shook her head, looking down at her knees.

"I *hated* her for a time, you know? After I joined the army. She tried to stop me before I left home, and we started arguing. Then I yelled that she could disown me if she wanted, and left anyway. Spite helped to get me through half of basic training."

"When people started bringing up my last name and comparing us, I hated her. Then I realised I joined the army because I *wanted* to be like her. And I hated her even more." Fareeha gave a short bitter laugh, moving her hands away to wipe at her eyes.

"We became distant after that. Then she died – or I thought she did – and I started regretting everything I ever said to her. Even took a leave of absence four months after the funeral, just to go back to her grave and ask for her forgiveness. And when she sent me that letter, telling me she was alive? I almost lost it. *God*." Her mouth twisted with resentment. "If only she would stop *fucking* with me for one second."

"I think she is ready to stop, Fareeha," Angela said. "The only way you'll know is if you sit down long enough to listen to her." She held the probing gaze as it narrowed with suspicion.

"You know something."

"I– Not exactly."

"You're holding back, Angela," Fareeha accused, rolling her chair closer as Angela looked away. "Did she say something to you?"

"No. Not in so many words, but—" Angela found herself grasping for a lifeline under the scrutiny, unsettled by how uncannily similar it was to Ana's. Thank god Fareeha did not do this often. "She should be the one to tell you. Not me."

Fareeha grabbed onto her wrists, forcing the doctor to look back at her. "Angela, if you know something, tell me now. I want to hear it."

"No," Angela repeated. "I don't want to interfere. This is between you and Ana. I have no right to—"

"*No right*? I've been waiting for you to say something since all of this started!"

"I am an *outsider*, Fareeha. This is a family matter. It is yours to work out with Ana. Not me."

Fareeha stared at her, mouth parted in disbelief. The grip on her wrists loosened as rough hands slipped back into hers. Then, surprisingly, Fareeha's lips curved.

"Is this why you've been keeping quiet?" she asked, amusement on her face growing when Angela nodded uncertainly. "Because you thought..." A soft laugh broke through then, and the doctor felt even more lost.

"Angela," Fareeha said, pulling her closer. "As far as I'm concerned, you *are* family."

She stared, at a loss for words as she processed Fareeha's. Did she...mean it the way her mother did? Ana always called her squad mates her family. Brothers and sisters-in-arms who would sacrifice their lives for one another. But then, that would put her on equal footing with Jack, Jesse, and the rest. Or did she mean...

"Maybe I should be clearer." Fareeha broke her train of thought, resting Angela's hands against her chest. "You are my family. The bond between us is as thick as blood." She tilted her head, peering at Angela who nodded slowly.

"I..." Surprised at how thick her voice sounded, she paused and took a breath. "Your mother may disagree."

"Then she can kiss my ass."

The laughter burst through her throat without warning. Fareeha had said it as nonchalantly as no one ever dared before. It seemed there were perks to being related to renowned, fearsome heroes.

"You're not just saying that because you want me to spill the beans."

"Partly." Fareeha shrugged with a smirk on her face. "But I mean it. And if my mother disapproves, she can disown me for all I care."

That brought back the gravity of their situation. Or rather, Fareeha's situation. Angela heaved a sigh, bringing calloused hands to her lips.

"To be honest, I still don't want intrude. *But*," she said, cutting Fareeha off when she opened her mouth. "I will just say this. Ana loves you. Perhaps just as much as you love her. But it has blinded her. She wants so much for you to be happy, that she has forgotten to think about what *you* want. And I think you should tell her. I know you and Ana. Neither of you are the type to keep avoiding an issue like this."

Fareeha snorted. "She never cared for what I want."

"And you. I know you have suffered because of her actions, and you have every right to be angry at her. All I ask is that you sit down with her, and tell her how you feel. Even if you have to cry, or scream, or shout, you need to let her know. If you let this drag on, you'll just hurt yourself further. Ana, as well." Angela cupped her cheek. "And I hate seeing you like this."

"But what if it just gets worse. What if after everything, we still can't..."

"Then don't force yourself. Like I said, it's still early. What you need to do now is just lay everything on the table. So Ana knows why you feel the way you do." Angela looked pointedly back at the dispirited gaze. "Can you do that?"

Fareeha exhaled slowly through her nose, closing her eyes. Then she bent down, setting her head on Angela's shoulder.

"I don't know," she muttered.

"Come now," Angela said, patting her back. "Have more faith in yourself."

Then, after a moment's hesitation, she added, "And trust in your mother as well."

Chapter End Notes

Alright, no direct Fareeha-Ana interactions yet, but the next one will be full of it.
Direct. Very direct.

Overture

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

As it turned out, Fareeha did not have to instill all that much faith in herself. Or rather, she did not have the luxury of time to do it.

She was on her way to the gym for a solo workout session – her usual training buddies were deployed on a lengthy mission – two days after Angela's advice. The first thing she noticed when the doors parted, was that only the backup lights were on. She could just discern someone's silhouette under the dim lighting, sitting perfectly still on top of a stack of gym mats. If she was more superstitious, she would have jumped out of her skin at the sight. But Fareeha's familiarity with the figure's posture merely poured cement to the bottom of her stomach.

Eyes on the silhouette, Fareeha tapped on the light's controls to reveal Ana sitting serenely on the mats. Her legs were crossed, back straight, hands resting lightly over her knees as if in meditation. She made not a single move at Fareeha's entrance, merely opened her eyes to watch her daughter setting her bag at the side.

"I've been waiting for you."

Sorely tempted to roll her eyes, Fareeha knelt down to unzip her bag. "In the dark? What are you, a movie villain?"

"You still haven't developed a flair for dramatics, I see."

"You have enough for the both of us," Fareeha retorted, taking a sip of water from her bottle. She stood and turned towards her mother, who had left her perch on the mats to stand on the floor. Ana wore a simple grey t-shirt with black gym pants. She padded silently towards the centre of the mats on bare feet, all the while keeping a steady gaze on her daughter.

"What do you want?" Fareeha asked. Her hands closed the water bottle reflexively, feeling her body tense under the scrutiny.

"To spar." Ana's voice was quiet, but the challenge rang out as clearly as if she had shouted it.

She stared at the older woman's face, looking for a hint of humour. There was none. *She is serious*, Fareeha realised. The severity in her expression merely highlighted the absurdity of the situation. In Fareeha's mind, anyway. There was no way in hell she would spar with a woman thirty years her elder, especially when she was her *mother*.

"No."

"I don't remember giving you a choice."

Fareeha's upper lip curled in a sneer at the tone of command. "And I don't give a shit."

"You will step into the ring, or Doctor Ziegler will have a patient within the next five minutes," Ana intoned.

Gritting her teeth, Fareeha threw her bottle back into the bag. She yanked the zip closed and hoisted the strap over her shoulder. "This is stupid," she spat, stalking towards the exit.

"Athena, lock the doors."

The A.I. complied with an affirmative *beep* from the doors. Fareeha stood before the doorway, as though trying to open it from sheer force of will alone. Or through the sensors installed at the edges. But it remained shut.

"Athena, unlock the doors," Fareeha ordered.

"Negative. Insufficient level of authority."

Un-fucking-believable. "Athena, unlock the fucking doors. *Now.*"

"Using expletives will not increase your level of clearance."

Choosing to ignore Athena's snarky reply, Fareeha wheeled around and glared daggers at Ana, who stood still with her hands behind her back.

"Let me out of here," she hissed.

"No. I will not play cat-and-mouse with you any longer," Ana replied with the same patience she carried when she had coached Fareeha in the martial arts, all those years ago. "If words will not help us, then our fists will have to do. When we leave this room, it will either be as mother and daughter again, or as the worst of enemies." She stretched out a hand, indicating a spot in front of her.

"Take your position."

Fareeha all but threw her bag to the floor. Routine procedure managed to throw its reins over her anger, and she knelt down again to open her bag.

"No." Ana stopped her as she fished out her gloves. "No safety gear."

"But—"

"No. We have a doctor for later."

She stared at Ana, wondering if she had lost her mind to old age. Then she placed the gloves back reluctantly, knowing Angela would skin her hide when she found out, and took her place in the sparring ring. Pushing down flashbacks to her childhood and memories of a younger Ana's smile, Fareeha focused on the older woman. The sight of her white hair reminded her of how *wrong* this felt.

"You'd do well to give your best, Fareeha," Ana said, reading her mind. "I am not as frail as you think I am." Her feet parted and Fareeha did the same, shifting into fighting stance.

"Style?" she asked, hands still hanging by her sides as she grappled with the morality of this damned situation.

"Freestyle," was all Ana said before she flew forward. Fareeha froze, the instep of Ana's foot hovering dangerously close to her cheek. There was not a single tremble as Ana kept her leg in the elevated position – a testament to her physical fitness.

Fareeha saw Ana's eyes close halfway in a sigh, before she felt a slamming force against the back of her ankles and the air burst out of her chest. Winded and surprised, Fareeha stared up at the ceiling from the mats.

"This is your last warning, Fareeha. I will not hold back next time."

Indignation swelled in her chest and she kicked up from her supine state, landing neatly on her feet. Ana's brow rose slightly at the display, body at ease even when Fareeha brought her hands up. She focused on her opponent's body, ready to move at the slightest twitch as they circled around each other. A smile curved Ana's lips.

"You were never this cautious before. Do not hesitate. *Fight*."

That set off a bell in her mind, and Fareeha propelled forward with a fist already halfway to Ana's head. It was swept aside easily – as expected – and she followed up with a kick, only to feel a controlled palm strike on her solar plexus. The air left her lungs a second time, then a kick on the back of her left knee dropped it to the mat.

"You're still holding back, little one."

Fareeha shot up, catching the punch aimed at her cheek and finally landed a kick on Ana's side. It was softer than she intended, but a hit was still a hit, though it did nothing to slow Ana down. Suddenly finding herself balanced on one foot, with the other caught in Ana's elbow, she found herself being shoved towards the mat yet again. Her temper flared the moment her back hit the floor, and she did not bother getting back up fully. Instead, she set herself in a charge towards Ana, catching the woman by surprise when she rammed into her middle, this time sending them both to the ground. Kneeling over Ana, Fareeha raised her fist and slammed it down.

It landed a hairsbreadth from Ana's temple, the force against cushioned ground sending a tingle up her nerves. Ana did not appear the least bit fazed, and Fareeha tried not to think about how she made no move to dodge the blow.

"Still holdin–"

"*Stop fucking with me!*"

The scream ripped through her throat, taking both women aback. Ana held her glare, watching as Fareeha processed the situation through heavy breaths.

"And how am I *'fucking with you'*?"

Her composure merely threw a tankful of fuel into Fareeha's anger, sending her fist downward again. Where it did not hit Ana, *again*.

"You– I–" Her nails bit into her palm, when she realised she had nothing. No vitriol to hurl at her mother. Years of bitterness and hatred and yearning and wondering and regretting, only to culminate at the tip of her tongue as thin air.

"No," she whispered, straightening herself. "No. No, I'm not... This nonsense is over–"

A sharp force crashed into her cheekbone. Then she felt her knees leaving the floor, vaguely aware of a pull on her tank top and pants, before she hit the ground for the fourth time. Hand covering where Ana punched her, she lifted her gaze from pastel blue mats to watch the sniper get back onto her feet.

"Did I hear you correctly, Fareeha?" Ana said, straightening her t-shirt. "Were you planning to run again? With your tail between your legs?"

"You have to try harder to get a rise out of me," Fareeha growled, getting back on her feet as well.

"Oh? Did I not get one just now?"

"*Shut up!*" She raised her voice involuntarily, like a helpless child railing against her parent. Ana was baiting her and she took it with eyes wide open. Hands curling into fists, she glowered at Ana, hating how she was reduced to an ineloquent child within a few short seconds.

"So much anger. Where is it coming from, Fareeha?"

"Why don't you ask yourself that question? Surely the great Captain Amari would know."

Ana's lips parted in a fleeting moment of hesitation, then closed abruptly. "She would rather hear it from her daughter."

"What, so she can toss it aside like all the times before?" Fareeha snorted. "No. I won't give you the satisfaction." She turned away and strode to her bag. Retrieving her phone, she started typing a message to Angela for a rescue.

"You think I don't care about you."

[Trapped in gym by Ana.]

"Fareeha, you're my daughter—"

[Used Athena to lock doors.]

"I love you."

[Get me out. Use my rocket launcher if you—]

"All I ever wanted was a better life for you."

"That's *all* that ever mattered to you!" Her words exploded against the four walls. The phone bounced twice across the hard wooden floor before hitting the wall behind her.

"It's always about what you want. It's always you, you, *you*. What you want for me. What you think is best for me. What you want me to become. You didn't even bother showing your face after telling me you were alive. Don't you *dare* pretend to care—" A violent, hitched breath interrupted her sentence, and she fought against the relentless squeezing in her throat. "You never did."

"But I do—"

"Then you have a *fucked up* way of showing it!"

A small voice in the back of her mind screamed at her to stop, that the sight of Ana's crestfallen expression was hurting *her* as well. It fueled the unravelling of the nasty mess of knots constricting her heart, spurred further on by the ghost of Angela's voice telling her *to cry, to scream, to shout*. And she did.

"You never gave me your blessing in *anything* I wanted to do. You put me down whenever I did something *you* taught me. Every time I tried to fight for something I believed in, all I got was your disapproval. I thought I was doing something wrong. I thought you weren't proud of me because I was fucking something up. I thought I wasn't good enough to be an Amari, because everything I did wasn't good enough for *you*!"

Her throat was raw, cheeks wet. She looked the opposite of the indomitable soldier she had built

herself up to be, but she was beyond caring.

"You made me feel like a fuck up. Even now—" She clenched her teeth, swiping across her eyes with the back of a fist. "I can *feel* you wanting to lecture me because I'm here."

Taking deep breaths to counter the sobs, Fareeha leaned back against the wall, dragging her fingers across her cheeks. There was a dull throb where Ana had hit her.

"It took me a long time, but now I know better. I don't need your approval. I don't need anything from you. I am where I've always wanted to be. And I did it by myself. Despite everything you've done to stop me."

"Fareeha," Ana said quietly, closing the distance between them. Fareeha straightened herself in response, and the older woman paused in her tracks. She watched the sniper's shoulders rise and fall, recognising the only outward hints of a silent sigh. How many times had she seen that before? After she did something wrong and was about to receive a reprimand. When she fought back against strict demands. It never failed to make her feel guilt, no matter how angry she was.

Not anymore. Fareeha steeled herself. *She will never make me—*

"I am proud of you. I always have been."

"Nice try," Fareeha snapped. Unable to take Ana's proximity, she walked to where her phone lay. It remained unharmed from the abuse, and Fareeha gave silent thanks as she unlocked the screen.

"Do you remember that time, back in Giza, when you were...15. Or 16?" Ana sounded a little closer than where she stood a few seconds before. Fareeha focused on the phone, erasing the line of gibberish entered by her finger when it flew blindly across the keyboard in anger. She tried to block out the woman's voice, but it filled her ears anyway.

"I had to bail you out of the police station. You were arrested for starting a fight with five gang members in the marketplace, and causing damage to public property." Ana's voice moved closer. She remained kneeling on the ground, back towards Ana, bent determinedly over her phone. But her thumbs had stopped typing.

"They were harassing your friend. So you fought them, and managed to keep her from harm. You, on the other hand... You had a twisted ankle, a broken arm, and...fractured ribs. Three of them. There were bruises all over your face, and cuts across your brow and bottom lip. I remember you, sitting in the cell with bandages all over, staring straight back at me when I came to pick you up. There was not a single hint of regret in your eyes. You bore the pain and my... disapproval without complaint."

"I knew, then and there, that you were a fighter. A *protector*." A quaver shook her voice, and Fareeha screwed her eyes shut. "I was so proud of you then. I was so proud to have you as my daughter."

"Yes, you were. You were so proud, you grounded me for a month."

"I had to. Because I knew where you were headed. You were going down the same path so many Amari have taken. You were going to live up to our family's legacy. And I could not let that happen."

Fareeha turned slowly, finally looking up at Ana from her crouch. The hard edge in her eye was gone.

"Have you ever stopped to wonder why our family has so many generations of soldiers?" She

paused. When no answer came, Ana continued, "It's because the world never stops asking for more blood to be spilt in the name of peace. There will always be a need for more soldiers to be thrown into the battlefield. And there was always, *always* an Amari ready to answer the call." She closed her eye, shaking her head.

"We've lost so many of our own to conflict, Fareeha. My grandfather. Then my mother, and my father. And my..." She stopped again. This time, Fareeha saw the slight tremble in her lip. Her voice was raspier when she went on, "All of them, dead for a cause greater than themselves. A cause that doesn't remember them anymore. And it is never going to end." A cross between a snort and laugh blew past Ana's lips. "Even I almost joined them."

"I wanted to protect you from that. I never wanted you to bear the burden of this...Amari legacy. I would have given *everything* I had to spare you from the all the pain, the suffering it would have brought upon you. And I failed."

"I failed you. In more ways than I thought."

Ana kept her gaze on the ground as Fareeha stood.

"Athena, unlo—"

"I was 15."

The sniper blinked in surprise.

"When you bailed me out, it was about two weeks from my 16th birthday. You took leave to come back and celebrate it with me. But I refused when the day came."

A faraway look entered Ana's eye, her brow furrowed as she sifted through her memories.

"Yes," she said with the ghost of a smile. "Yes, and I ended up having dinner with your aunt and uncle instead. Then I left a pack of food outside your bedroom door when I returned."

Fareeha crossed her arms and shifted on her feet, a little thrown by the change in mood. But a part of her could not stop from grabbing onto the breath of fresh air.

"You didn't fail me," she said. "I chose to fight. It was *my* decision. I don't think anything you could've done would have stopped me."

A corner of Ana's mouth curled, and she nodded. "Even so...I am sorry. For making you feel like you were not enough. For trying to suppress you. For not being the mother you needed."

It was difficult. So difficult to maintain eye contact. Her arms tightened over her chest as Ana took a few steps closer.

"Fareeha. I understand if you cannot forgive me. All I ask, is for a chance to make amends. Let me make up for all the times I was not there for you." Ana reached up, tentatively wiping off fresh tears cutting through the drying tracks on her cheek. "Let me earn the right to be your mother again."

She broke down then. The last time she lost herself this hard was when she read Ana's letter, learning that her mother was still alive. Fareeha's lungs wracked with sobs that left her breathless, gasping for air between each exhale. She pressed a palm against an eye, in a half-hearted attempt to stop the tears. Moisture pooled around where Ana cupped her cheek as she uttered words of comfort, free hand on Fareeha's shoulder to keep her from folding over. Shaking her head, unable to find the words, Fareeha yanked Ana into a tight embrace. She felt the elder's arms circling

around her back, clamping strongly onto her. Without a thick layer of armour between them this time, Fareeha could feel Ana's desperation in the grip of her fingers as she clung onto her daughter.

"You *are* my mother," Fareeha whispered thickly, hoping she was comprehensible through convulsive breaths. "All I wanted was for you to come back."

Ana gave a short burst of wet laughter beside her ear. "You are too lenient, little one."

"Don't complain," she said, with a giddy smile spreading across her face. It seemed almost unbelievable. What had only been a thing of daydreams and wishful thinking was finally a reality. Part of her wanted to pinch herself. But she settled for Ana's ministrations when she pulled away, wiping off the tears staining her cheeks. Fareeha did the same, done with her mother in half the time.

Ana's hand fell to her shoulder, red-rimmed eye gazing up at her daughter. "But I am serious, Fareeha. I will do better this time. I promise."

"I know you will."

The sniper's grasp on her tightened, before she took a deep breath and stepped back. "Well then. Let me start now." She gestured at the sparring ring. "Would you like to finish our bout?"

"You're not serious," Fareeha said, even as she followed behind Ana. "I thought you were just trying to make me talk."

"Correct. But now I would really like to go for a round. No one was willing to spar with me ever since I arrived. I need to dispel my old lady image." She turned, raising a brow at Fareeha's reluctance. "Come on, I need to keep in shape too. And I'm giving you a chance to hit me with no consequences. Is that prospect not appealing?"

Fareeha snorted. But she stepped onto the mat anyway. "You're crazy."

"It runs in the family," Ana replied. "Now, don't hold back. I want to see just how strong my little soldier has become."

[Injured. Heading to med bay now.]

Angela rolled her eyes at the message, pushing away from her office desk. How many times had she told Fareeha to keep in mind her own limit in the gym? It was definitely a workout injury – the woman was not assigned any physically demanding tasks around the base that day. Just two shifts at mission control, and inventory at Torbjorn's. Angela already had her usual reprimands at ready when she wheeled her trolley over to a bed and waited for her patient to appear. But when the doors opened, she was faced with not one, but *two* patients.

The sight before her was unexpected, to say the least. Fareeha carried Ana on her back as she strode over to the doctor. The younger Amari had a sheepish look on her face, but the older just wore a nonchalant smile. Angela's eyes narrowed as she catalogued the smattering of dark purplish bruises across both their faces.

"What the hell happened?" Angela asked, watching Fareeha set her mother down on the bed.

"Gym," Fareeha replied. She took care not to meet the doctor's glare, focusing instead on removing her gym bag from Ana's shoulder.

"You look like you fell all over the gym." Angela passed the medical scanner over Ana first, identifying a bruise on her lower jaw and cheekbone, a few more on her arms and legs, and a twisted ankle. Fareeha was a little worse off, sporting similar injuries except she had two fractured ribs and a moderate wrist sprain.

"We were sparring, Doctor," Ana admitted calmly.

"*Sparring?*" Angela said incredulously, fixing Fareeha with an accusing look. "You *sparred* with your own mother?"

"She insisted."

Angela gave an explosive sigh, massaging a temple. "And I'll assume you didn't use safety gear."

"You remember," Ana said, smile growing wider.

"Some things never change, it seems." She reached for the medical trolley, but halted. Taking another look at Ana's foot, Angela quickly retrieved her staff from the office. She held it in front of Ana sternly.

"I'm going to use this on you. But just this once. The staff is reserved for major injuries. It was not designed to patch you up each time you refuse to take proper safety measures."

"You're not giving me a concession because I'm old?" Ana said as the healing stream latched onto her.

"I *am* doing this because you're old. And like Jack, you refuse to admit you're twenty years older." When the last of the bruises disappeared, Angela eased off on the trigger. "You're not going to heal as quickly as you did before. So please, for the love of all that is good and pure, use your safety gear next time. You'll sustain enough injuries during missions; you don't have to inflict pain on yourself off duty."

"Your tongue got sharper."

"Stubborn old soldiers make for very good grindstones," Angela deadpanned, turning her gaze to Fareeha. "You, sit down."

To her surprise, Fareeha chose to sit beside Ana. She busied herself by readying an analgesic and a splint, listening to their short exchange in Arabic. They sounded more comfortable with each other. There were less awkward pauses, and their replies less terse. Angela took that as a good sign, even if they did achieve this ease by beating each other up. And here she thought one Amari was trouble enough.

When she turned around with a syringe in hand, Fareeha automatically lifted her tank top to reveal the dark reddish bruise on her side.

"*Mein gott*, Ana. Did you have to hit her so hard?" Angela muttered. She held onto Fareeha's uninjured side as she administered the treatment, suddenly feeling self-conscious under Ana's gaze. The warm, familiar skin under her hand became dangerous territory, and she pulled away the moment she was done, reaching for the splint on the trolley.

"She'll be fine," Ana said. "She has a doctor looking after her."

Grateful that her fingers did not fumble on the splint's straps, Angela placed it carefully around Fareeha's outstretched wrist.

"So. How long have you been together?"

Fareeha yelped when a strap bit into her wrist.

"*Scheiße!*" Angela loosened it hurriedly. "I'm so sorry!"

Ana watched in amusement as Angela corrected her mistake, finally securing the splint and exchanging a glance with Fareeha.

"How did you know?" Fareeha asked.

"I may only have one eye left, dear," Ana said. "But it is still sharp." Said eye came to a rest on Angela, glinting with mirth. "You two may be in your thirties, but you still act like teenagers in love."

"We're not that bad," her daughter protested weakly.

"Perhaps. But I figured it out anyway." Ana paused. "And Hana confirmed it."

Angela groaned, slapping a palm to her face. "I'm going to confiscate all her games and kimchi."

"To be fair, I kind of...tricked her into telling me. You can let her off the hook for this one. So." The sniper waved a hand. "How long?"

"Almost a year." Fareeha said.

"Coming to eleven months," Angela verified.

Ana hummed. "That's good," was all she said, leaving the doctor in tenterhooks. She snuck another glance at Fareeha, who did not seem to share her anxiety.

"So you...approve?"

The sniper's eye flickered over to Fareeha for a moment. "Not that you need it, but yes. You are all I ever wan—" She stopped herself abruptly. "I can think of no better match for my daughter."

The breath Angela held for the past two weeks was finally let out. She met Fareeha's tender smile, finding no trace of the emotional upheaval sparked by Ana's return. Fighting the impulse to kiss her right then and there, Angela turned back towards Ana.

"She will never want for anything. I'll take good care of her. I promise."

"Good." Ana reached forward, clasping gently onto Angela's shoulder. Fareeha's scoff – '*what am I, a child?*' – went unacknowledged when the older woman pulled her closer. "Because if you dare to hurt my daughter, you will learn that heroes *do* die."

"*Ami!*"

"And you, rascal." Ana's grip on Angela loosened, as her other hand met Fareeha's cheek in a light-hearted slap. Strong enough to send a message, but not enough to sting.

"What was that for?!"

"That's for making Angela worry for you all the time." Then she leaned in, putting an arm around Fareeha's shoulder. "And if you dare hurt Angela in any way, the next shot I put in you won't be a healing dart."

Fareeha narrowed her eyes, staring back at Ana. "You're really taking this mother thing seriously, aren't you?"

The sniper laughed and ran a hand down the back of Fareeha's head.

"Of course. I'm an old woman. How much time do I have left to be a mother?" Ana exhaled deeply, then focused on the women before her. "I am happy for the both of you. Truly."

She wrapped an arm around her daughter when Fareeha enclosed her in a firm hug. Then her eye roved over to Angela, lips parting in a smile as she tugged the doctor in as well. Feeling Ana's arm rest around her waist to keep her close, Angela returned the favour and held onto the Amari women.

"Imagine," Ana said. "I returned to find one daughter. Now I have two. I must be blessed."

Then Fareeha looked up at Angela, concern crossing her features as she examined the doctor. Only when gentle fingers brushed across her cheeks, did Angela realise tears had fallen.

Chapter End Notes

Fareeha cried. Ana cried. Angela cried. I'm crying because I'm now emotionally constipated.

Thanks for the comments and reviews so far. There's one more chapter coming up, for Ana to keep to her promise.

Family, Pt. 1

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

"Ah! Ami, stop shooting at my ass!"

"Use my call sign, habibti."

"Your call sign is your real name."

"Yes, but it doesn't reveal that I'm your mother."

"You just announced it over the radio!"

"Ladies," McCree broke in through the comm. "You're on the team channel."

Pharah cursed in her mother tongue, yanking the empty dart out of her rear end. Even though she was armoured, the sensation of healing chemicals being injected through her behind was one she could live without.

"Language, Pharah."

"One more time," Pharah continued in Arabic, as she decommissioned another rebel squad with a rocket volley. "And I'll get Mercy to follow me instead."

"One more threat like that and I'll put one into your ass crack."

"Ana, Pharah," 76 cut in. "English, please. And stop using the team channel."

"I heard my name," Mercy said. Pharah could hear McCree's revolver unload its chamber in the background. "Do you need assistance?"

"No, my dear," Ana replied. "We are just having a little disagreement."

"About?"

"About her aim," Pharah said, ejecting a spent clip from her launcher.

"Which is ass-tounding, by the way," Ana quipped. A long-suffering groan escaped Pharah's lips.

Mercy laughed, aware of Ana's antics after Pharah's complaints about their last two missions together. Which, apparently, was not confined to her daughter for this mission.

"Ana, stop shooting at our asses," 76 said. The man had been noticeably more lax about bantering since Ana started participating in missions. Although he still refrained from joining in, the occasional quip or two were still growled over the channel. "You should've outgrown this habit by now."

"It's not a habit, 76. I'm doing it on purpose so you snails would hurry up. Think of it as a slap on a horse's behind."

"One slap is enough for me, thank you," McCree muttered.

"76 had two," Mercy helpfully informed them, getting a warning grunt from 76. "But the darts

were designed to cause minimal discomfort. All you should feel is a prickling sensation. McCree, 3 o'clock."

Two revolver shots rang out in Pharah's ear as she sent rockets flying at the remaining rebel reinforcements. They disappeared in a shower of sand and blood, and her visor was finally clear of enemy tags. Reloading her rocket launcher, Pharah flew towards Ana's position. The wind whipping across her face was beautifully cool against her sweaty skin. Wearing a suit of armour that shot rockets was warm enough. But wearing it under the sweltering heat of the midday desert sun meant she was being roasted alive. Pharah made a mental note to talk to Torbjörn about a better coolant system.

"76, northern checkpoint is secure. Heading to the base now."

"Copy. We're pushing into the hangar, but a few squads have run off to the armoury. Keep them busy. We'll join you when we're done."

"Understood. Pharah, out."

The team channel finally clicked off. Their overall mood was rather light, despite the importance of this mission. They had been contacted by a...*friend* of the Saudi Arabian government, who was concerned by the hostile takeover of a military research facility hidden deep in the desert. Two of their top scientists had been taken hostage, and any attempts to rescue them would be greatly appreciated with covert funding. Needless to say, failure was not an option. Overwatch needed all the support they could get.

Thankfully, the mission had been going smoothly so far. Bravo team had not broken radio silence, which meant they were still under the radar as they headed towards the scientists' position through the back door. Alpha had made quick work of the exterior defenses, and were about to cut off the rebels' ability to escape through the air. Though the scientists' safety was priority, 76 also wanted to clear the base of hostiles and claim it back. They needed as much gratitude from their contact as possible, and if that meant going the extra mile, then so be it. Besides, this was a matter of national security – a good way of repairing Overwatch's image should they come through. *When* they came through.

Pharah spotted Ana's cloaked figure, shifting as the sniper got onto her feet at the sight of her approach. Angling her thrusters for descent, she landed gracefully on top of the water tower beside Ana. She holstered her launcher, raising an arm to let Ana slip her rifle strap through, and gathered the sniper in her arms. At Ana's nod, Pharah tightened her grip on her passenger and took to the air.

"You should get Torbjörn to install a passenger harness in your armour," Ana suggested. She had an arm slung around Pharah's nape and both hands clutched onto her rifle – the only thing securing her to Pharah, by way of its strap.

"This is combat armour. It's not meant for transport."

"Then maybe you should adapt it, since you've been carrying me all over for the past missions."

"How about *you* wear a strap, instead?"

Ana clicked her tongue. "What happens when you need to carry someone else?"

"That's for emergency transport. *E-mer-gen-cy*," Pharah repeated each syllable slowly. "You're the only one who's been treating me like your personal airborne chauffeur."

"Maybe I should get a grappling hook like Widowmaker. So I don't have to tolerate your sass."

"Good. Then I don't have to listen to your nagging during missions."

She grinned at Ana's scoff, but it did not last long as they neared the base. Pharah lowered her altitude and speed, cruising as subtly as she could while the sniper looked for a suitable perch. It did not take long before she pointed at the communications tower.

"There." Ana shifted her rifle so the strap twisted once over Pharah's shoulder, and took aim. Three muffled shots later, the Raptora visor showed three grey figures collapsing to the metal platform at the top of the tower. Pharah bit down the praise that rose to her tongue, knowing full well that Ana would not appreciate it. Instead, she angled their trajectory so they would remain undetected, and set Ana down on the platform.

"Be careful," the sniper said.

"Yes, ma'am." Pharah withdrew her launcher and took one last glance at Ana – who was entering the control room – before flying off again.

She rounded the perimeter of the armoury at a safe distance first, so that her attack would come from a direction opposite Ana's. It would bait them into focusing on her, while the sniper took out as many as she could before detection. Gliding sideways, Pharah waited patiently as her visor identified and assigned tags to the hostiles. There were almost fifty of them, all moving in and out of the armoury in a frenzy. She was grossly outnumbered, but the element of surprise would help take out at least...ten of them. And ten more would fall to Ana in the same amount of time, leaving thirty.

Manageable. Pharah levelled her launcher, visualising the best trajectories to sow the most chaos.

"I've disabled their comms, 76," Ana's voice chirped in her ear.

"Good. We've just cleared the hanger. Will head to you once we've locked it down. 76, out."

"When you are ready, Pharah." Ana switched to a private channel. Her voice was quiet, almost flat.

Pharah rested a finger on the trigger as she soared over the armoury, dropping three rockets into three squads. Red tags blinked off her visor in rapid succession just as a large blast shook the ground below, cutting off panicked voices mid-scream. She must have scored a hit on some explosives with the last rocket – taking out almost twenty bodies. The count rose as more soldiers dropped to the floor, courtesy of Ana. *Almost too easy.* Pharah swooped back in as they concentrated fire on her, emptying her current clip then flying out of range. Ana picked up the slack during the lull as she reloaded, cutting down their enemies to about a squad and a half.

"Reinforcements."

Red blips started clustering at the right corner of her visor, and Pharah turned her head to find at least five more squads sprinting to her position. No, make that four. One broke away from the rest, closing in on Ana's position. She spotted three fighters in that squad shouldering large, sleek cylindrical launchers. But her worry was cut short when the air around her came alive with hot lead. Noting the echoing reports of sniper rifles in the midst of gunfire, Pharah finished off the stragglers by the armoury and maneuvered out of range of the ground troops. She kept her movement erratic, tracing the bullets' paths back to their point of origin.

There. Pushing her thrusters to max, Pharah wound through the air towards the snipers, feeling several bullets bouncing harmlessly off her armour. She cut her jets at the sound of sniper shots, dropping a few feet before bombarding their position with an entire clip. As her targets vanished

in a shroud of smoke and fire, Pharah heard a concert of blasts to her right.

She forgot about Ana.

Pharah spun in the air, watching three rockets soar towards the communications tower. One exploded mid-way, triggering another to detonate prematurely as well. The last one missed its mark, hitting the tower below the platform. Thankful for the stroke of luck, Pharah flew straight for Ana, feeling lightning shoot up from her legs as armour-piercing rounds bit into her flesh. The bullets remained lodged, having lost their force from chewing through her armour. But she kept her focus on Ana, especially when she heard only two launchers fire this time – the sniper had taken one bombardier after their first salvo.

Her visor flashed a rapid blinking warning, as high-pitched beeping mixed with the whistle of rockets on her tail and the pounding in her ears.

"Jump on!" Pharah shouted through the radio, although it was unnecessary. Ana was already on her feet, rifle strap coiled around her arm to secure the weapon. She holstered her launcher again.

The beeping turned to a single continuous siren, Raptora systems wailing at the critical proximity of the rockets. Pharah dared to lower her velocity a little – ramming into Ana at this speed would only serve to break her bones. The sniper leapt into her outstretched arms. She barely had time to adjust her hold when the rockets crashed into the tower behind them, impact rippling through the air with an onslaught of debris. Lowering Ana so her head was covered, Pharah pushed her thrusters to ride the shockwaves as her lower back ignited in white-hot agony. Her vision went dark for a split-second. Then she became aware of the increased pressure on the back of her neck, and Ana's stricken voice repeating her name.

Shaking her head, Pharah blinked once and realised her hold on Ana had loosened, leaving the woman half-hanging from her neck. The sharp pain in her back flared when she adjusted her arms and clutched her mother close to her chest. They flew over the high walls of the base's perimeter, and Pharah started a rapid descent because her arms could not hold Ana's weight for much longer.

"Fareeha," Ana said, hand on the side of her helmet. Her clouded consciousness did not register the note of panic in the older woman's voice. "You're hurt."

"Call sign," Pharah managed to breathe through a clenched jaw and heavy breaths. The more the pain surged through her body, the lighter her head became.

"Don't joke around. Land gently. *Land—*"

Ana's warning was cut off when Pharah thudded on the ground. The impact ripped a cry of pain from the soldier, and she fell to her knees as Ana was dropped onto ground. She remained bent over the sniper, fingers digging deep into sand as the need to breathe deeply clashed with the jolt of pain each breath brought. Pharah barely noticed Ana crawling from under her, gently coaxing her to lean against her shoulder.

"What— Is it—" Pharah panted, feeling a tinge of copper on her tongue.

"Glass shard from the control room windows. It's...rather big. Can you feel your whole body? Limbs?"

It must be close to her spine. Gathering enough wit about her, Pharah managed to wiggle her hands and feet. "Yeah. Think so. Can you remove it?"

Ana set her gently back on her hands, moving towards her back. She kept herself as still as possible when Ana touched the glass, sending a lance of feedback through her nerves. At the light

pull, Pharah cried out again.

"Stop, *stop!*"

"I can't remove it. The glass and your armour are digging into your back. We need to cut them out." Ana returned to her side, taking a healing dart out of her ammo bag and sticking it into Pharah's back. The pain was alleviated – not fully, but just enough to stop breathing from being a chore. She started to rise from her stooped position, firm hands on her shoulders forced her to do it slowly.

"Pharah, Ana," 76 spoke through the radio. The roar of gunfire almost drowned his voice out. *"Where are you? We're at the armoury, but–"*

"Pharah's down," Ana replied quickly. "We're outside the base and mobility is limited. We need extraction from this position."

"Understood. We're almost–"

"76, we have the scientists," Tracer – leader of Bravo team – interrupted. *"Heading to extraction."*

"Good. Hang tight, Ana. We'll get to you soon."

The channel clicked off. Ana sat on her haunches, lifting Pharah's visor.

"How are you feeling?"

"Been better. But I'll live," Pharah replied, trying to sound as nonchalant as possible. It was not working – Ana's face was still lined with worry. She supposed sounding weak and out-of-breath did not really help. "This is nothing. I've been through worse."

Ana looked as though she wanted to say something, but thought better of it. Instead, she drew Pharah close, resting the younger's head on her shoulder and patting on the helmet soothingly. If not for the pain it would cause, Pharah would have laughed. A trained soldier, armed with a rocket launcher and suited up in state-of-the-art combat armour, being cradled by her mother in the middle of a mission. It was a rare sight to catch on a battlefield, to be sure.

Faint tremors shook the ground they sat on, causing Ana to bring her rifle up in one hand. The other fell to her daughter's shoulder, as the pair looked around for the source of the disturbance. But there was nothing in sight.

"What the fuck?" McCree's voice blasted over the squad channel. *"Is that...an underground hangar? It wasn't in the plans given to us!"*

"Our contact's been holding out," 76 said through controlled pants. Alpha team must be legging it to extraction already.

Pharah raised her eyes to the air, watching the distant shapes of two combat VTOLs slowly rise over the base.

"We're in the VTOL. Ours," Tracer clarified. *"Waiting for you, Alpha. But we're gonna have a little trouble with our new friends."*

As if on cue, the enemy planes opened fire in different directions. Presumably on Alpha and the VTOL, which Bravo already boarded. No attention was being paid to the Amari. Either the rebels had not noticed, or they deemed the pair incapable of being a threat. But Pharah still felt like sitting ducks out in the open.

"We have to help, *ami*."

The sniper frowned at her, mouth thinning. "I think we can. But...can you hold out?"

"Yes. Plan?"

"I can take out the pilots. But I need elevation to get a good angle." Her eyes landed on the glass sticking out from Pharah's back, uncertainty becoming clearer by the second.

"Then I will fly you," Pharah said before Ana could change her mind. She forced herself to straighten, clenching her jaw to stop the groan from escaping. "Could you give me another dose?"

Ana stared back her determined gaze, before taking a breath and nodding. She slipped out another dart and attached it to Pharah's neck this time. Strength returned to her limbs, and Pharah hauled herself onto her feet, snapping her visor back in place. She was still breathing heavily, but the pain was now isolated to her back and legs, leaving her mind much clearer than it had been. Raising an arm, she let Ana hook the rifle strap around her shoulder again, and carried the sniper.

"Tell me if you need to land, Fareeha," Ana said beside her ear, as she adjusted her rifle's position. "Don't be a hero."

"You're implying I'm not one." Pharah activated thrusters, the jerk on her body sending another cascade of pain down her back.

"There is no hero who is alive," Ana replied as she settled into position. She pressed herself tightly against Pharah's chest, head over one shoulder and rifle over the other.

"76, we will disable the VTOLs. Just get onboard and fly to our position."

"Ana," Mercy spoke instead of 76. *"Pharah's vital signs are less than optimal. You used your darts, correct? But the damage—"*

"I'll be fine, Mercy. See you in the VTOL." Pharah cut the channel before Mercy could finish her protest.

"My bed's open to you for tonight. When she locks you out of her room," Ana said. She shifted again in Pharah's hold. This time, she kept still against the Raptora armour.

"Stay ahead of them." Then Ana went silent.

Pharah maneuvered as cautiously as possible, matching her trajectory with their own VTOL as it took off. A few wayward shots were taken at them, but the enemy's range was not nearly as great as Ana's sniper rifle. She took care to maintain their distance, while watching Tracer pull off stunts that made her grateful she was not on the aircraft just yet.

Ana's rifle rang out. The sniper waited a few seconds, before cursing under her breath and taking another shot.

"To the left," she said, and Pharah did as instructed. "Enough."

Ten seconds later, she heard a heavy crash followed by an explosion – presumably from the first VTOL. Pharah did not have the luxury of looking back, acting as a makeshift sniper's perch. More shots were being sent their way, in the rebels' futile attempt at avoiding their comrades' fate. Ana fired off two consecutive shots, and another crash followed not long after. Tracer's laugh bubbled through the radio.

"You never fail to amaze me, Ana!"

"Thank you," the sniper spoke curtly, peeling herself from Pharah's armour.

"Heading your way. Get ready to board."

The channel went off, and a hand on Pharah's cheek got her attention. "Still alright?"

"I'll live," Pharah replied, deciding not to bring up the slow loss of feeling in her legs. "Just that when we're in the plane, prepare to land on your feet."

She saw Ana's brows knit together, sensing something wrong. But she said nothing as Pharah angled their approach towards the VTOL's open ramp. Mercy was already standing there at ready with 76, watching the soldier sail smoothly in. Pharah let her mother down feet first, before her own legs gave out. She crumpled onto Ana, the older woman staggering slightly under the combined weight of her body and armour. Ana, with the help of 76, lowered Pharah onto her knees. Her helmet was lifted off her head as Mercy examined the damage.

"Remove her armour, but leave the back piece on," the medic ordered. 76 and Ana sprang into action, disengaging the various pieces of her armour and setting them carefully on the floor. Pharah shed those on her arms as Ana held her steady, before Mercy finally came to kneel before her. Gently, she shifted the soldier so that she sat with her side pressed against Ana.

"How much do you feel in your legs?"

"Tingling. That's it."

"Can you move them?"

Pharah's exposed toes twitched slightly. "That's all I can manage."

"Alright, listen. I need you to stay still. Ana's darts have stopped most of the bleeding, but the glass is too close to your spine and I don't want you to make it worse. I cannot remove the shard now, and I won't give you painkillers. Tell me the *instant* you lose feeling in any part of your body, if that happens. Understood?"

Pharah nodded, and Mercy turned her attention to Ana. A quick scan later revealed the sniper to be in good condition.

"Take care of her while I tend to the others," Mercy said. She lowered her medical scanner, letting her face fall a little.

"Don't worry, Doctor." Pharah smiled. "I'm not going anywhere."

The medic allowed herself a sigh. Then she gestured at 76, who marched out with her. Mother and daughter sat among the scattered pieces of Raptora armour, and Pharah turned her head to examine Ana. She looked none the worse for wear, save for the dirt smudges all over her clothes. Light brown eyes were narrowed slightly, brows furrowed in a frown.

"It's not your fault, *ami*," Pharah said, reading her mind. She rested her head against the crook of Ana's neck, closing her eyes as she forced her body to relax. Feeling a sharp shard of glass embedded in her back was troubling, but she tried not to let it get to her. Ana's arm around her shoulders tightened. Her free hand came to a rest on Pharah's arm, giving the occasional pat – whether for Pharah's or her own comfort, it was unclear. Maybe both. Pharah half-expected Ana to start rocking her to sleep.

"I know," Ana sighed, resting her head on top of Pharah's. Her tone said otherwise.

"This reminds me of when I fell down the stairs in our home," she said, hoping to take the sniper's mind off heavier thoughts. "I was a kid at the time. I fell, then I just laid there on the floor and cried until you came to hold me."

Ana laughed softly. "Yes, I remember. You cried until you fell asleep, and I had to carry you back to bed." Another pat. "Are you going to do the same now?"

"I do feel like crying. But I'm too tired," Pharah replied. It was true; her eyelids were drooping. Maybe she was too comfortable, but she had no intention of moving. "Am I allowed to sleep?"

"I don't know. Just stay awake until Angela comes back."

Pharah nodded. She kept her eyes moving, focusing on different objects and corners to keep her mind active.

"Ami?"

"Hm?"

"I can't believe I'm saying this. But I think I want a passenger harness."

Angela paused at the door, taking in several unexpected sights at once. The lights in Fareeha's room were off, much earlier before her usual sleep schedule. Fareeha was already sleeping peacefully in her own bed, at Angela's insistence. Partly because she wanted the soldier to have the comfort of an entire bed to herself. And partly because she was still ticked off from the way Fareeha brushed off her concerns during the mission. Her little grudge had mostly worn off by now, which was why Angela came here instead of staying in her office.

Her gaze fell upon Ana, who lay on the couch with her eye closed. The woman's body was straight, hands clasped neatly over her stomach, head resting on a pillow as she slumbered. Angela supposed her presence was not all that unexpected after all. Ana was the first to descend upon the doctor when she emerged from the operating theatre, and had barely left Fareeha's side since. That she would continue her watch through the night was predictable.

As quietly as possible, Angela walked over to the bed first, pulling the medical scanner from her pocket. A quick check showed that Fareeha had followed her advice to take it easy for once – everything was in order. Putting the device away in relief, Angela knelt down beside the bed. Fareeha was sleeping on her front to avoid disturbing the shallow remnant of her wound, arms splayed out on either side of her. There was a damp spot on the pillow where drool trickled past her parted lips. She smiled, and pushed Fareeha's chin a little so her mouth was closed. Pulling the blanket up from her hips to cover her shoulders, Angela bent down, placing a soft kiss on top of her head. Then she went to the wardrobe, picking up the spare blanket and headed towards the couch.

Draping the blanket over Ana, Angela reached her shoulders where she jumped. Ana's eye was open and staring at her as she held the blanket dumbly in her hands. The sniper had stayed so still that Angela did not realise she was awake. A smile widened Ana's lips as she reached up to take the blanket in her own hands.

"Thank you."

"You're welcome. Did I wake you?"

"No," Ana said, sitting up. "I was awake even before you came in."

"Oh." Angela stood uncertainly as Ana crossed her legs beneath the blanket. At the indicative pat on the couch, she sat down beside Ana, letting her back melt blissfully into soft cushions. She let out a sigh, closing her eyes and slumping further in.

"So, how did our 'friend' react?"

"He was very grateful. Gave us a large monetary bonus and shared some experimental tech with us." Angela wrinkled her nose, recalling that more than half that tech were for weapons. Torbjörn was probably dancing in his lab like it was Christmas morning. After debrief with their contact, Angela had been poring over the blueprints, coming up with ways to create new non-lethal prototypes from them. Then she would wait for a week, allowing Torbjörn to familiarise himself with the tech, before accosting him with her ideas.

"And you celebrated by working non-stop."

Angela opened her eyes, looking tiredly back at the warm gaze. "I couldn't help myself."

Ana chuckled, patting the top of her head. "You should follow your own advice, Doctor. Maybe no one obeys your orders because even you don't."

"That's because I don't have to," Angela replied. She sat up straighter, trapping a nearby cushion in a hug. "I don't walk around with wounds all over myself after every mission. Most of the time."

Her eyes wandered back to Fareeha – the main reason for her exhaustion. Honestly, running around that research facility and keeping up with her teammates was tiring enough. Spending three hours picking metal and glass shards out of Fareeha's back and legs left her wanting to pass out on the floor. It forced Angela to use the staff to knit the organs and flesh back together. But even with the personal concession, her vision had been blurred when she stepped out of the operating theatre. Only with the help of stimulants was she able to keep on her feet through the meeting after.

A warm hand came to rest on her knee. "Go rest, Angela. I will watch over her."

"I would rather stay here."

The lone eye came to rest on her, and she stood her ground under the scrutiny. Crinkles appeared at its corner when Angela passed the judgment, Ana giving a close-lipped smile as she stood up. Holding the blanket between her hands, she nodded at the couch. Angela considered protesting. She was the younger woman after all, it would not be fair to hog the couch for herself. But between Ana's raised brow and the dull throb in her head, she knew it was wise to surrender. So she did, laying down on the couch and letting Ana cover her with the blanket.

"Wake me up when you need to sleep, okay?"

"Do you really think I will do that?"

"...No."

Ana laughed and leaned down, kissing Angela's forehead. "Sweet dreams, little one."

"I'm 37."

"And I'm 60. What's your point?"

Angela grinned, pulling the blanket up to her chin. She watched Ana walk over to Fareeha's bed, her eyes finally closing not long after. Sure enough, when she woke up in the morning, Angela found Ana snoozing in a nearby armchair.

Chapter End Notes

I just want Angela to have a mom doting on her, okay.

This was supposed to be the last chapter. But the mission scene got way, way out of hand and now there's another chapter coming. I'm very bad at this planning thing.

Family, Pt. 2

Chapter Notes

This chapter includes a headcanon Blizzard already crushed. But whatever. Chill chapter ahead. Have fun.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

"I love you. I loved you from the first moment I saw you. You've become a part of my soul, and I'd rather die than spend the rest of my life without you."

The woman stared at her paramour with wide eyes, parted lips trembling. Tears fell, mingling with rain running down her cheeks. She reached forward, pulling the man into a passionate kiss that spoke of—

"Oh, come the *fuck* on!"

A piece of popcorn bounced off the screen.

"What is wrong with you? He's so useless and *ugly*! What the fuck?"

"Hana," Angela warned, blonde hair tickling Fareeha's jaw when she shifted her head.

"Look at him!" Hana continued regardless. She threw another popcorn, this time hitting the man squarely in the face. "Would you date a frog like that?"

"Frogs are cute," Lucio protested from beside her.

"I think he looks more like a goldfish," Ana commented.

"That's not the point." Angela made a sharp cutting gesture. "It's just a show, Hana. No need to get so worked up over it."

"It's not *'just a show'*, Angie. This swill of a serial is a disgrace to my country. I can't believe they even dared to air it overseas."

"You're just angry they didn't pair the lead with her best friend," Lucio said, grinning.

"Her best friend is *so* much hotter," Hana argued. "And she has the best buns I've ever seen on any actress. *Ever*."

"Well, I think the guy has pretty nice buns too," Jesse chipped in. He lounged across his armchair and, for once, was without his serape and hat. "You're being hard on him just because you're gay."

"And you're going easy on him because you're gay."

"You wanna go, twerp? Shooting range. Now."

"Bring it on."

"Children," Ana cut in lazily. "Stop before you embarrass yourselves. Especially you, Jesse."

"Why me?!"

"Because Hana is a better shot than you."

"What!"

"*Ha!*" Hana sprang up from the couch, several bits of popcorn falling out of the bowl in her hands. "Suck on that, you wannabe cowboy!"

Fareeha sent her mother a withering look as Hana and Jesse started to bicker. Ana peered at her over the rim of her teacup, hiding a sly smile by sipping her tea. After a month in the base, Ana had soaked up every little detail she could learn about her fellow agents, and built quite a good rapport with them. Fareeha was glad she fit back in so easily – until she noticed her mother's penchant for...shit-stirring. It was never really anything serious – just little quips and comments that started harmless squabbles, like the one Hana and Jesse were engaged in now. They were usually resolved amicably by the time everyone dispersed – except that one time she pitted Widowmaker and Lena against each other. Luckily no one else other than Winston had been on the scene, and Fareeha forced Ana to go apologise to Lena after. Not Widowmaker, though. Ana said she would rather eat her remaining eye than apologise to that woman.

Settling for an eye roll, Fareeha turned to her right, nudging Angela. "Switch the channel," she whispered.

Angela fumbled blindly for the remote control on the couch, leaning further into Fareeha as she flipped through the channels. It did not really matter what they put on – the television mostly served as background noise while the team hung out and chatted. This time though, Fareeha found herself concentrating on the screen as Hana pelted Jesse with popcorn after popcorn. The two had fallen into some weird competition: Hana threw the snack as haphazardly as possible, while Jesse jumped all over trying to catch them in his mouth. He was not doing a very good job; his side of the break room was already littered with popcorn. But he cackled along with the young woman nevertheless. Then Jesse finally caught a popcorn in his hand and threw it back at Hana – only to have it land neatly in Ana's teacup.

"Don't tell anyone I ever trained with you, wannabe," Ana said, picking the popcorn out. "I want my reputation intact."

"Whatever," Jesse grumbled, falling back into his armchair in defeat. He grabbed the last piece of popcorn flying towards his face and tossed it into his mouth. "Stupid lil' gremlin."

"Sore loser," Hana shot back.

"Hey, it's that new TV series that just started!" Lucio perked up, flapping his hand at the screen. Angela flipped back a few channels before he told her to stop.

Fareeha cocked her head. There was a perky woman onscreen, flanked by several friends, chattering non-stop as they entered a bridal boutique. Everyone watched in silence as the women discussed the latest fashions and what kind of dress the bride wanted for her wedding.

"Looks more like a documentary to me," Fareeha said. Her interest already took a nosedive into the negatives.

"Yeah! It's a docu-series. About couples preparing for their weddings. I heard some of the themes are absurd, like one couple parachuted into a float near the beach because of a spy theme? But the reviewers liked it."

"I don't know, sounds like a stupid series to me," Hana said. She brought three popcorns to her mouth, then whipped her head around. "Hey, you two can get a few ideas from here!"

Stiffening under the sudden attention from the entire room, Fareeha pressed back into the couch.

"Is there something I should know about?" Ana asked.

"No! We– I'm not– What?"

"Nothing happened that you need to know," Angela replied much more eloquently. Which, honestly, was not much of a feat considering how hard Fareeha was stammering. "Hana is just trying to be funny."

"No, I mean you could...you know?" Hana wiggled her fingers. "For future reference?"

Warmth started gathering about her collar at Hana's unsubtle suggestion. She snuck a glance at Angela, who was smiling benignly back at Hana. Hopefully she was planning murder under that tranquil façade. Fareeha would volunteer to be her accomplice.

"Hana has a point, Fareeha," Ana said. "When are you planning to get married?"

"*Ami!*" Fareeha's horror grew at the sight of her mischievous smile. "It's...too early."

"But you are playing for endgame, no?" Ana continued, and Fareeha wished she would lose her voice in that instant. Or Reinhardt would crash through the ceiling swinging his hammer around. Or anything that would stop this devil posing as an old woman from talking.

"Yes, we are," Angela picked up the slack again. Her fingers slipped through Fareeha's, giving a comforting squeeze. *I got this.*

"Then maybe you should think about it a little? Because let's be honest, you're not getting any younger. And I'm already getting old."

"What's that got to do with anything?" Fareeha asked.

"I want to have a grandchild before I die." Ana brought her cup up again, watching her daughter grow flustered as she sipped on lukewarm tea.

"A reasonable wish," Angela said.

Fareeha's eyes widened in warning. *You're not helping.*

The blonde's smile grew into a smirk, and she kissed Fareeha's cheek. "Isn't it, *Liebling?*"

"Oh god..." she groaned, sliding down in her seat. She had lost her girlfriend to Ana's wicked games.

"You know, Ana," Hana said. She leaned on the armrest to peer more closely at the sniper. "I've been wondering. Fareeha is your kid."

"I think so, yes," Ana replied, ignoring Fareeha's '*tsk*' beside her.

"Were you...a single mom?"

"Yes. I raised her by myself."

"So...you were never married?"

"I was."

"*What?!*" Fareeha snapped up in her outburst, sitting ramrod straight and staring at her mother. The room had gone quiet at Ana's reply.

"You never told me you had a husband!"

"Wife."

"*What?!*" This time, Fareeha was joined in by Angela and Jesse. Ana set her cup down on the coffee table, calmly pouring more tea from her teapot. The cryptic smile on her lips never wavered.

"Wait, then how the hell did you get Fareeha?" Hana asked, bowl of popcorn hanging limply from her hands.

"I picked her up from a garbage can." She finally laughed at Fareeha's offended expression. "Artificial insemination. What, how did you think I got you?"

"I just thought..." she said slowly, blush growing on her cheeks. "I thought you...had an accident? Then you just decided to keep me."

Ana laughed again, bringing her cup back up. "Please. Your conception was a little more glamorous than that."

"But Ana, your records never showed that you were married before," Angela said, leaning over Fareeha's shoulder. "Or that you were ever inseminated."

"I pulled some strings," Ana said simply. "I didn't want it to show."

"Why?"

"My wife wanted to keep it secret. Some of the procedures we used were experimental."

"Like?"

"I don't recall in detail." Ana's brow furrowed. "But it was something about...putting both mothers' chromosomes into the same egg? So the child has the genes of both parents, but not the donor." She patted Fareeha's cheek. "You have your mother's eyes, you know."

Fareeha opened her mouth, but was shoved back into the couch by Angela before she could say anything. The doctor's eyes burned with the same intensity she carried when reaching a new breakthrough in her research.

"Who carried Fareeha to term?"

"Me."

Angela clasped onto Fareeha's chin, forcing her to meet her gaze. "She has the second mother's eyes?"

"Yes. A bit of personality too."

"I never knew..." Angela said with something akin to reverence. Blue eyes examined her face, and Fareeha felt like she should be sitting on a petri dish. "I never knew you were a scientific

miracle."

"Thanks?"

"I could give the documents to you, if you want," Ana offered, causing Angela's head to whip around in excitement. Fareeha was reminded of a neighbour's puppy she always played with, tail wagging at top speed as she waved a Frisbee tantalisingly out of reach.

"Yes, please!"

Ana smiled indulgently, drinking more tea. "One step at a time, Angela. Marry my daughter first. Then you can start having children."

It was Angela's turn to blush. "Oh, no. I just want it for the knowledge."

"Sure you do."

Jesse leaned forward in his chair. "So, where did you meet your wife? In the army? You already had Fareeha when Overwatch was founded, right?"

"Yes and yes. She was in the Medical Corps. My company was assigned to hers for quite a while."

"Wait, *Medical Corps*? You mean, she was a doctor?" Jesse asked.

"Yup. One of the best. And the prettiest."

Hana stifled a laugh, glancing over at Angela. "Is having a thing for doctors an Amari trait?"

"Coincidence," Ana replied smoothly. "My parents were both soldiers. My grandfather married an architect."

"So...how did it happen?" The girl rested a chin in one hand, eyes bright. "You woke up in med bay one day and thought you were in heaven?"

"If only. She was treating me in a field tent. I was quite reckless back then, got into all sorts of trouble. Naturally, I was in her care a lot." Ana shrugged. "One time she was scolding me, and I realised I didn't want her to stop."

"That your kink?" Jesse grinned.

Ana rolled her eye heavenwards, then continued as though he never spoke. "She told me to stop getting hurt so much. Then I said I would, but only if she'd have dinner with me."

"Ooh!" Lucio perked up. He was sitting close behind Hana, with his full attention on the storyteller. "And? She agreed, right?"

"No," Ana grimaced. "She told me off for hitting on her and chased me out of the tent." She turned to Fareeha. "You had better luck, I hope?"

"Much better." And that was all Fareeha was willing to divulge.

Lucio pressed on, "But you got together eventually?"

"Of course. No one can resist my charms." She raised a brow at Fareeha's snort.

"You think very highly of yourself, don't you?" Fareeha said.

"Actually," Jesse replied in Ana's stead. "She *was* rather charming."

"*Was*?"

"You're even more charming now, mama bear," the cowboy quickly added at the hint of warning in Ana's tone. "Back at the old HQ, a lot of people liked her. There was always someone tripping over themselves trying to get her attention. Hell, even *I* had a crush on Ana, and I'm gay."

"That's...flattering. Odd, but flattering," Ana said. Then she paused, humming thoughtfully.

"Come to think of it, whatever happened to that betting pool?"

"Oh!" Angela brought a hand up to cover her grin. "I forgot about that."

"What betting pool?" Hana asked.

"Some of us were betting on who Ana would sleep with," Jesse filled her in. "Wait, how'd you know about it?"

"Jack kept the jar under his table. He's not the subtlest of people."

"Ah well, doesn't matter anyway. It probably got destroyed along with the HQ."

"Pity. I was planning to seduce someone and split the money."

Fareeha dragged a hand down her face, biting back a groan and slumping down again. This time she shifted so she leaned on Angela, head on her shoulder and knees resting in her lap. She closed her eyes as Angela ran her fingers through her hair, and Ana continued reminiscing about Overwatch's lighter moments with Jesse. Despite the brief bout of second-hand embarrassment, Fareeha found herself smiling. She listened as Ana spoke fluidly, raspy yet serene voice filling the break room, gripping her audience as surely as Reinhardt's booming narrations.

There was the occasional burst of laughter and slapping of knees when Ana delivered punch lines with a straight face, Angela's shoulder threatening to rock her head off its perch. Fareeha lifted her eyelids, watching Jesse follow Ana's story with wide eyes, pitching in his own embellishments from time to time. Hana and Lucio crowded on one side of their couch, so they could be as close to Ana as possible while they absorbed each detail the woman described. Ana held her cup in one hand as she gestured with the other, holding her audience captive. Tilting her head back, she noted each twitch in Angela's face as she hung on Ana's every word. Blue eyes lighting up in time with another chorus of laughs, lowering to meet her gaze upon noticing the quiet attention. Curved lips moved close to press near her temple, as fingertips traced slowly along her jaw.

Fareeha tried to etch this moment into her mind, wondering if she would remember it years down the road. Lounging in her lover's hold and surrounded by those she cared about, unburdened by the struggles of the world. Surely, nothing could disturb this—

"God, they're being mushy again. Oi." A piece of popcorn bounced off her hair and dropped onto her thigh. Fareeha glared at Hana, who smirked at her unrepentantly. "Tone it down or go somewhere private."

Ana's hand came to rest on her back. Fareeha raised her head to look at her mother, the lop-sided grin setting off warning sirens in her mind. Sure enough, Ana asked, "Would you like some tips before you head to the bedroom?"

"Oh fuck off," Fareeha groaned, parting reluctantly from Angela.

"That's one way to do it."

"Ami!"

Her fingers squeaked against the metal surface, leaving faint markings on dull grey steel. The hard edge dug into her diaphragm as she tried to get a good grip, hands scrabbling only for her to slide further back down.

"Use your legs, little one," Ana called from where she sat, revelling in her daughter's struggle.

"Why don't you help me!" Fareeha raised a hand to reach further, but the shift in weight made her slide off the roof and land back on the walkway. Gritting her teeth and moving a few steps back, Fareeha ran and jumped to latch onto the edge of the roof again. She raised her eyes towards Ana, who had a phone in her hands. A phone that was trained on her.

"Are you taking a video?!"

All she got was a chuckle and no offer of help. So Fareeha took that one piece of advice from Ana, and started kicking against the metal wall. But each time she tried to get a foothold, the soles of her shoes would slip right off the vertical surface. Curse whoever did such a good job of cleaning the tower.

"You are very bad at this."

Fareeha growled and set her forehead down for a rest, hair ornaments clicking dully against steel. The watchtower's room had furniture. Chairs that Ana could have brought out to the balcony to sit on while waiting for the sunset. But no, this sniper had to climb onto the roof and refuse to entertain her daughter's pleas to either come down or lend a hand. The infuriating thought made Fareeha swing her leg upwards again and again, hoping her foot would catch on the edge somehow. No luck. Then Fareeha finally resorted to common sense.

She dropped back down on the floor, and walked around the corner to where Ana was sitting. Fareeha glared up at the phone – still pointed at her – with an arm stretched out.

"Help me up."

"One moment."

Fareeha lowered her arm as Ana tapped once on the phone. Then a few more swipes and taps followed and, at her smile, Fareeha caught onto what she was doing.

"Are you sending that!" Fareeha jumped, but the phone was lifted out of her reach. "Don't!" She slapped at her mother's knees, but was treated to a victorious grin when Ana tapped one last time on her phone. At the buzz in her pocket, Fareeha pulled out her own phone to discover Ana had sent the video to a group chat. The one that everyone was in.

"I hate you." Fareeha muted the chat as replies started rolling in, and pocketed the phone. "I hate you so much."

Ana lowered a hand, returning Fareeha's grip and hauled her up. "Come now. You're breaking an old lady's heart."

"You have no such thing," she declared. Shuffling on hands and knees, she settled down beside the heartless old woman who was snickering away. Fareeha leaned over, reading all the teases filling Ana's phone screen. Only those from Mei and Winston were encouragements; the gorilla

even pitched in a few tips on climbing. She rolled her eyes before Ana locked the screen and set the phone down on the roof.

"How may I help you, young padawan? Surely you didn't climb all the way up here just to keep me company."

"Isn't that reason enough? And you know, in this lighting, you *do* look like Yoda."

That earned her a threatening eye squint. "Reinhardt showed you the movies."

"More like forced us to have a marathon. Marathons," she hissed to emphasise just how many times they had to re-watch the films.

"Remind me to teach you how to escape next time," Ana said, patting idly on the metal roof before remembering her teapot was not with her. "Actually, no. I'll let you suffer for saying I look like Yoda."

"You always taught me honesty is a virtue."

"I also taught you to have respect for your elders."

"I don't remember."

"Obviously."

Fareeha laughed, leaning back on her hands to admire the view. One good thing the Gibraltar outpost had was the scenery. Many a time had she snuck up to high vantage points for private moments with Angela, just sitting back and enjoying the view. She gazed out at the horizon, spotting minute dark specks sailing leisurely over calm waters. That was when she remembered why she was here in the first place.

She turned to Ana, who had her head tilted up towards the sky. Then she realised she did not know how to start. Her fingers drummed against the roof as she searched for appropriate words to string together.

"You want to ask about her."

The drumming stopped. Ana was looking straight forward now, but her demeanour remained as serene as before. Fareeha crossed her legs and shifted her weight forward, mirroring Ana's posture.

"I'll understand if you don't want to talk about it."

"No, it's fine. I've had thirty years to deal with it."

Fareeha clasped her hands together. "What happened to her?"

"You know how in some wedding vows they say, *'til death do us part'?*" Ana turned her head to see Fareeha's nod. "Yup."

"I'm sorry."

"Me too. She would have loved to see you before she died."

"How did she...?"

"Terrorist attack on the camp she was in. Killed while she was trying to evacuate the patients."

Ana tilted her head. "I was almost...three months pregnant with you at the time."

"Must have been difficult."

"It was," she sighed. "I don't know what I would have done if I didn't have you."

"Probably gone off to wipe out the terrorists by yourself." Fareeha tossed her a cheeky smile. "But aren't you glad you hung on to have me?"

"Yes," Ana said. "I hung on to give birth to a monkey of a daughter."

"Hey!"

"You said I look like Yoda just now."

"I was joking."

"I'm not."

"*Tsk.*" Fareeha crossed her arms, unwilling to admit that Ana was actually right. Her memories were vague, but she did remember jumping all over and getting bruises for her playfulness. Scoldings too, when Ana was around.

"I'm sorry you never got to know her. She would've been a great mother. Definitely much better than me."

"Don't say that."

"Didn't you just say honesty is a virtue?"

"*Yes,*" Fareeha drawled. "But who she was never really mattered to me. Not in the negative sense," she added when Ana's brow rose. "It's just that...I never spent a lot of time thinking who my other parent was."

"Really."

"Okay, maybe a little when I was young. I thought it was weird that all the other kids had two parents and I only had one." Fareeha shrugged. "But after a while, I realised that I didn't care. I had you. And that was enough."

"You have very low standards," Ana said, though her gaze softened.

"And you are too hard on yourself. Besides." Fareeha took a deep breath, sucking in a lungful of cool air. "I don't think I was that great a daughter either. I must have given you so many headaches, when you already had enough to deal with in Overwatch."

No reply at the end of her sentence. They sat in silence as the beginnings of orange tinted the sky. Fareeha felt the chill seeping through her jacket and zipped it up. Ana, on the other hand, seemed to have no problem with the lowering temperature. She sat with her hands in her lap without even the slightest shiver, gazing out at the sea.

"You were there for me longer than you know." Ana spoke without warning, and so quietly that Fareeha took a few seconds to realise it. She stared at the older woman's profile, not comprehending her meaning.

"After I lost her, I... It was so difficult to move on. I'd planned to spend the rest of my life with her. When she was gone, I felt alone. Even when your aunt moved in to take care of me, I still felt

so alone. Like no one mattered to me anymore."

"One night, I was in my bedroom. Crying again. Missing her. Wondering how I was still living. That's when you kicked in my womb for the first time." Ana smiled. "It's like you wanted to remind me that you were still there. With me. And after that, it got a little easier, one day at a time. I started thinking about how you would look like. How you would sound. Whether you'd be playful and keep getting scrapes on your knees. What kind of person you would grow up to be."

"And? I didn't disappoint you?"

"A little." She laughed when Fareeha shoved her lightly. Ana caught her hand, trapping it between both of hers.

"Fareeha, of all that I ever imagined you could be, nothing can compare to who you are now."

"You have very low standards."

"And you are too hard on yourself."

Fareeha matched Ana's grin. She threw an arm over the woman's shoulders, pulling her close to press her lips atop silver locks.

"You'll never be alone again, *ami*. I'll always be here with you."

"And I, as well."

"I could kick you again, if you want."

"No."

"But I want to." Fareeha shifted her leg, but a firm hand on the knee stopped her.

"Try anything, and I'll throw you off the tower."

Fareeha's dare died on her tongue when bright light spilled out of the room beneath them. Only then did she realise the sun had set, their surroundings illuminated by the half moon and stars. The pair looked down, watching Angela stride onto the balcony.

"Sorry to interrupt, but I brought some snacks and tea. One of your herbal blends," Angela added, looking up at Ana.

"Now there's a perfect daughter," Ana said, her grin taking a teasing edge. "Why can't you be more like Angela?"

Fareeha grumbled to herself, watching Ana drop off the edge with the graceful agility of a cat. She followed her mother down, except she landed with an elephant's thud. Ignoring the click of Ana's tongue, Fareeha leaned down to kiss Angela softly.

"Enjoyed yourself?" Angela asked when they parted.

"I was about to get thrown off the tower."

The doctor cocked a brow but asked no more, already familiar with the Amari brand of nonsense. Instead, she led Fareeha into the room, where Ana was filling three cups with tea. There was a plate of neat oblong-shaped *halawa*, and beside it was *Bünner*— no, *Bündness*...*Bündnuss torte*—?

"*Bündner Nusstorte*," Angela said, noticing her mental struggle as they sat at the table.

"Mm." Ana already had a piece of the pastry in her mouth. "I remember eating these back at the Swiss HQ. We forced Jesse to eat them because he hated how nutty it was."

Fareeha tossed a small piece of *halawa* into her mouth and leaned back into her seat, as the women recounted all the 'nut' jokes they had made at Jesse's expense. They would have many more gatherings like this, to be sure. Just the three of them, accompanied by an eclectic mix of tidbits, chatting about any topic they could pull from the air. It reminded Fareeha of her childhood when her aunt and uncle would drop by for a visit, always with a sweet treat to coax her into sitting still for a short while.

So many things have changed since then, but it still felt the same. She was with family. And Fareeha would have it no other way.

Chapter End Notes

And that's it. I'll finally continue with "Fight & Flight", which will definitely have more Ana.

Thanks for reading and all the comments, I love reading each of your reactions. AND, this awesome artist drew [this](#) for the story. Check it out and give them your support!

Add: So, I've started a new story for Ana and her wife. If you're interested: [Halcyon Days](#)

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!